

A  
DISCOURSE

Concerning

Meekness

AND

Quietness of Spirit.

To which is added,

A SERMON

On *Acts* 28. 22.

SHEWING

That the Christian Religion is not  
a SECT; and yet that it is  
every where spoken against.

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By *Matthew Henry*, Minister of the Gospel.

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*K*  
L O N D O N,

Printed for *Tho. Parkhurst*, at the Bible and  
Three Crowns in Cheapside, near *Mercers-Chapel*.  
1699.





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TO THE  
READER.

**I** Do not think it at all needful to tell the World, what it was which led me to the Writing of this Discourse concerning Meekness, the substance of which was preached several years ago; Nor am I concern'd to Apologize for the Publication of it; If I thought it needed an Apology, I would not consent to it. That Temper of Mind which it endeavours to promote, and to charm Men into, every one will own to be highly conducive to the Comfort of Humane Life, the Honour of our Holy Religion, and the Welfare and Happiness of all Societies, Civil and Sacred: And therefore, while the Design cannot be dislik'd, I hope what is weak and defective in the Management will be excus'd. Some useful Discourses have been of late published against Rash Anger, and an excellent Disswasive from Revenge by the present Bishop of Chester, wherein those brutish Vices are justly expos'd to our Loathing; It is the same Design I am driving, while I recommend the

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*contrary Virtues to the Love and Practice of  
all that profess Relation to the Holy Jesus :  
And if this Essay have that good Effect upon  
those into whose Hands it shall at any time  
fall, I have my End.*

*As to the Sermon annexed, it is published  
(with some Enlargements) at the Request of a  
very Worthy Friend who heard it preach'd in  
London, last Summer : And since, blessed be  
God, there are a great many Testimonies born  
at this day, against the avowed Infidelity,  
and Impiety of the Age, I hope this may be  
accepted as a Mite cast into that Treasury by  
a Cordial Friend to Peace and Holiness,*

Chester, Nov. 21.  
1698.

M. HENRY.

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T O

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## To the READER.

**I***T was with real difficulty, through the not easily vincible Aversion of the Reverend Author, that these two Discourses are now at length brought together, into publick view. Nor, were that more distinctly known, would they be the less acceptable to the more Judicious part of the World.*

*Through the Humility and Self-depressing thoughts that are wont to accompany true Worth, the best Men are not always the most equal Judges of their own Performances.*

*The Reason which Socrates is reported to have given, why he made nothing publick, \* that the Paper was dearer, and of more \* Apud value than what he had to write, we can Stob. easily apprehend satisfy'd no body but himself.*

*Indeed, if many, that more truly might, had made that judgment, more Mercy had been us'd towards that perishable Commodity without Injustice, or Infelicity to the World.*

*But in reference to what hath true value in it, and so real usefulness unto common Good, as appears in this little Volume; a sort of extortion was not unduly us'd, to draw it forth, and wrest it out of the hands that Penn'd it, in the first intention, for a few, that it might serve*

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*serve a further end ; and, as it was equally capable, do good to many.*

*It hath, indeed, been so ancient, and so common a wont, to let things that tend, tho' never so directly, to the bettering of Mens Minds, stand to be gaz'd at in Books, or obtain at the most (as hath long ago been noted) somewhat of cold praise, without any thought of ever being possess'd of the things themselves, that Men easily agree, because it is a fashion, to pardon to one another this absurd neglect, seldom knowing shame for it, or taking notice of the incongruity, that it should be thus in reference to things of this most excellent kind ; when in things that apparently serve to bodily, or secular advantage, there is so observable a difference !*

*Otherwise, for the former of these Discourses concerning Christian Meekness, were it a Common Design to have Minds habited and cloath'd, according to it, what a blessed calm would it introduce into our World ! How serene and peaceful a Region would it make every Man's Soul to himself, and to all about him ! It would then be truly said of the Christian Church, This is the House of God, this is the Gate of Heaven.*

*How near an Alliance this Complexion of Soul hath with the Heavenly Regions, the Ingenious Moralist \* aptly represents, taking notice, That the upper and better order'd part*  
of

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of the World, next the Stars, is driven together into no Cloud, hurried into no Tempest, never tost about in any Whirlwind, is ever free from any thing of Tumult, only the inferior Regions throw about Thunders and Lightnings. So is the sublime Mind always quiet, placed in a station of undisturb'd Tranquility, sober, venerable, and compos'd, &c.

*And nothing is more plain, than that the higher and greater things our Minds are exercis'd and taken up with, the more sedate they are, and less liable to unbecoming Commotion; And hereto the scope and design of the annexed Discourse most aptly agrees.*

*Christianity is too high and too great a thing to be a SECT; of too near affinity to Heaven, the common term of all our pursuits and hopes. That Holy Religion, by its direct and steady tendency thitherward, abstracts our Minds from low and little Arts and Aims. All Parties terminate in the Earth, there can be no room for them above; they will be buried in the dust. Christian Religion is debas'd and abused, when it is made subservient to so mean purposes. It is treated Ignominiously, when Men so represent it, or concern themselves about the Affairs of it, as if it were a Sect: Or, as if to be a Christian, and to be a Sectary, were terms of the same signification; or its Cause were accordingly to be managed, wrathfully, and with fury, with calumny and slander, of such as in every arbitrary mode of Speech and Practice agree not with us. So the little Interests are wont to be served, and contended for, that belong only to this present World, and will end with it.*

To

## To the Reader.


Too many, God knows, treat the Noble Cause of Religion at this rate, at least what they pretend to be it. Religion it self, indeed, disdains to be so served; nor, where Minds are once deeply tinctur'd with the spirit of it, can admit or endure it: But it is dishonoured beyond all that can be expres'd, by having any thing of this kind made so much as seem to belong to it.

I shall not offer at describing them who do it this wrong, it being so fully done by the worthy Authors own words, p. 8. of this Sermon.

May the Blessing of Heaven succeed all such great, worthy, pacifick Designs, as are here pursu'd! Amen.

JOHN HOWE.

## ERRATA.

Page 1. line. ult. *for*, no such possibility is suppos'd, *read*, it is suppos'd scarce possible. p. 16. l. 18, 19. *for* in a strict, *r.* constant. p. 20. l. 27. *r.*  p. 21. l. 15. *r.* the Rebels. p. 26. Marg. *r.* Terrib. de Ed-  
sientia. p. 54. l. 34 *for* Wrath, *r.* Wealth. p. 59. l. 5. *r.* thy self. p. 73. l. 9. *dele* you. p. 74. l. 2. *for* new, *r.* most. p. 75. l. 15. *for* unwell come, *r.* welcome. p. 79. l. 17. *dele* you. p. 81. l. 27. *r.* are very unfit. p. 101. l. 11, 12. *r.* tis the learned Bishop Hall's Remark. p. 107. l. 28. *r.* allusion. p. 127. Marg. *for* P. Animus, *r.* Diff. Pub. Mini. p. 118. l. 20. *r.* lay. p. 121. l. 15. *r.* give. p. 141. Marg. *r.* Phurnut. p. 145. l. 30. *r.* at any time. p. 148. l. 9, 10. *for* Unrighteousness, *r.* Uprightness. p. 151. l. 20. *r.* Furies. p. 152. l. 15. *dele* Courage, and. Besides many literal mistakes, as p. 32. l. 2. haply *for* happily. p. 35. l. 10. place *for* places. p. 44. l. 18. hungry *for* hunger. p. 106. l. 18. *r.* Homilists. And in the Latin, as p. 51. Marg. *r.* desideras. p. 54. Marg. *r.* quasivis. p. 77. l. 9. *r.* Evangelium, &c. And in the Greek, as, p. 79. l. 20. *r.* σωτων. p. 131. Marg. *r.* συνδουλαι αυτων. And several others.

## In the SERMON.

Page 9. Marg. *r.* agnitione. l. 17. *r.* could *for* would. p. 5. l. 11. *r.* Geni-  
us. l. 28, 29. *r.* recovering it. p. 6. l. 31. *for* Creator. *r.* Center. p. 13. l. 36. *r.* charge. p. 18. l. 34. *for* marks *r.* means. p. 22. l. 15. *for* of, *r.* for. p. 26. l. 24. *r.* Lot's godly Conversation. p. 41. l. 6. *for* commanded, *r.* concern'd. p. 43. l. 31. *for* affect *r.* assert. p. 47. l. 2. *r.* This is the way. l. 17. *r.* that they are.

# A Discourse concerning MEEKNESS.

1 Peter III. 4. [*latter part.*]

— *Even the Ornament of a meek and quiet Spirit, which is in the sight of God of Great Price.*

**T**HE Apostle Peter in this Epistle, (as also his beloved Brother Paul in many of his) is very large in pressing upon Christians the conscientious discharge of the Duties of their particular Relations, and not without good reason; for generally it holds true, That *we are really, as we are relatively*: He is here in the former part of this Chapter directing Christian Wives how to carry themselves in that Relation, to the Glory of God, their own Comfort, and the Spiritual Benefit and Advantage of their Yokefellows: And among other good Lessons he teacheth them how to dress themselves as becometh Women professing godliness. Those of that Sex are commonly observ'd to be very solicitous about their Ornaments. When the Question is ask'd, *Can a Maid forget her Ornaments, or a Bride her Attire?* ~~no such~~ *possibility is suppos'd* Jer. 2. 32. This prevail-  
Genus mul-  
ebre est  
ornatum,  
Lavin. in  
loc.  
ing



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ing inclination the Apostle here takes hold of, for the recommending of those *Graces* and *Duties* to their choice and practice, which are indeed the most excellent and amiable adorning, not only of *their Sex* to whom the Exhortation is primarily directed, but of the *other* also for whom no doubt it is likewise intended. Observe his Method :

So is —  
abuses.

1. He endeavours to *wean them* from the vanity of *outward Ornaments*, v. 3. *whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning, &c.* This doth not forbid the sober and moderate use of decent Ornaments, when it is according to the *Quality*, *Place*, and *Station*, and in due *season*, (not on days of Fasting and Humiliation, when 'tis proper for *Ornaments* to be *laid aside*, *Exod. 33. 4, 5.*) But it forbids the *inordinate Love*, and *excessive use* (that is, the *abuse*) of them. There *may be* the *plaiting of the Hair*, and the *wearing of Gold*, and there *must be* the *putting on of Apparel*, that *shame* which came into the World with sin hath made it necessary; But we must not *make* these things *our adorning*; that is, we must not *set our hearts* upon them, nor *value our selves* by them, nor think the better of our selves for them, nor pride our selves in them, as if they added any *real excellency* to us, nor say to them as *Saul* did to *Samuel*, *Honour me now before this People*, out of a vain ambition to make a *fair shew in the flesh*. We must spend no more care, or thoughts, or time, or words, or cost, about them, and lay no more stress or weight upon them than they *deserve*, and that is but a *very little*. It is but *glory hung upon us*, as the expression is, *Isa. 22. 24.* and hath *no glory* if compared with the *glory that excelleth* it even in the  
Crea.



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Creatures that are far below us; for *Salomon* in *Matth. 4.*  
all his glory was not array'd or beautified like *29.30.*  
one of those *Lillies* which to day is, and to mor-  
row is cast into the Oven. We must not seek first  
these things, nor seek them most, as if we had  
Bodies for no other end but to bear out our  
clothes, and had nothing else to do with them.  
but to make them *fine*. It was the *Folly*, and  
prov'd the *Ruin* of that *rich man* in the Parable,  
that he made his *Purple*, and his *fine Linnen*,  
(with other the Ornaments and Delights of the  
Body) his good things, the things in which he  
placed his happiness, and in which he had his  
*Consolation*, *Luke 16. 19, 25.* that is, in the  
Language of this Scripture, he made them his  
*adorning*, and so, being *uncloathed* of these, he *2 Cor. 5. 3.*  
was found naked. Let not the wearing of Gold,  
and the putting on of Apparel be *abuses*; the  
*World*; so it may be rendred; (*'tis Mundus mu-*  
*liebris* †.) Let not these things be all the *World* † *Immun-*  
with us, as they are with many, who reckon to be *dum mulie-*  
out of the *Fashion* (whatever it be) is to be *brem potius*  
out of the *World*. Christians are called out of the *convenit di-*  
*World*, and delivered from it, and should evi- *ci. So Ter-*  
dence a *Victory* obtained by *Faith* over it, as in *tullian de*  
other Instances, so in this. It is a prescribed Rule *habitu. mul.*  
of our Holy Religion (whether they will hear, *cap. 4.*  
or whether they will forbear) that *Women* adorn *Gal. 1. 4.*  
themselves in modest Apparel, with shamefaced- *1 John 5. 4.*  
ness and sobriety, *1 Tim. 2. 9.* But whereas there  
are some on the one hand, that exclaim against  
vanity in Apparel as the crying Sin of this Age  
above any other, as if it were a new thing under  
the Sun, and the former days were in this respect  
better than these: And others on the other hand,  
condemn it as a piece of Phanaticism to witness

*Ecc. 7. 16*

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(as there is occasion) against this *Vanity*: Both may receive a sufficient *Answer*, if they will but read that excellent *Homily* of the Church of *England*, intituled, *An Homily against Excess of Apparel*, (N<sup>o</sup>. 18.) by which it will appear, That even in those early days of the Reformation, it was a *Vanity* that prevail'd much in our *Land*, and which the *Rulers* of the Church thought themselves obliged to *reprove*. But we will hasten to the Text.

Verse 4.

2. He endeavours to bring them in love with the better *Ornaments*, those of the *Mind*, the *Graces* of the blessed Spirit, here called the *hidden Man of the Heart*; — *ὁ κρυπτός ἄνθρωπος*. *Grotius* observes, that tho' he writes to Women, yet he useth a Word of the *Masculine* Gender, because the Ornament he recommends, is such as both Men and Women must be adorned with. *Grace*, as a living Principle of regular Holy Thoughts, Words, and Actions, is sometimes called, the *new Man*, *Eph. 4. 24.* sometimes the *inward Man*, *Rom. 7. 22.* and *2 Cor. 4. 16.* and so here, the *hidden Man of the Heart*. 'Tis call'd a *Man*, because its made up of many *Parts* and *Members*, and its Actions are *Vital* and *Rational*, and it restores those to the Dignity of *Men*, who by sin had made themselves like the *Beasts* that perish. 'Tis call'd the *Man of the Heart*, because

*Pro. 4. 23.* out of the Heart are the *issues of the Life*; there lie the *Springs* of the Words and Actions, and therefore into that the Salt of Grace is cast,

*2 Kin. 2. 21.* and so all the Waters are *healed*. He is the Christian indeed that is one *inwardly*, and that *Circumcision*, that Baptism, which is of the *Heart*, *Rom. 2. 29.* 'Tis call'd the *hidden Man* of the Heart, because the Work of Grace is a secret

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secret thing, and doth not make a pompous shew in the eye of the World; 'tis a *Mystery of Godliness*; a *Life* that is *hid* with Christ in God, to whom *secret things* belong; therefore the Saints are called his *hidden ones*, Psal. 83. 3. for the World knows them *not*, much less doth it yet appear *what they shall be*. The King's Daughter that is espoused to Christ is *all glorious within*, Psal. 45. 13. The working of Grace in the Soul is often represented as a *Regeneration*, or being *begotten again*; and perhaps when this good Work is call'd the *hidden Man of the Heart*, there may be some allusion to the *forming of the Bones in the Womb of her that is with Child*, which Solomon speaks of as unaccountable, as is also the *way of the Spirit*, Eccle. 11. 5. compare John 3. 8. 14, 15, 16. And lastly, it consists in that which is *not corruptible*; 'tis not deprav'd or vitiated by the *corruption* that is in the World thro' Lust, and is in the Soul a *Well of living Water, springing up unto eternal Life*, John 4. 14.

In the Text he instanceth in one particular Grace; one *Member* of this *hidden Man in the Heart*, which we must every one of us adorn our selves with, and that is a *meek and quiet Spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price*. Where observe,

1. The Grace it self here recommended to us, it is a *meek and quiet Spirit*. There must be not only a meek and quiet Behaviour outwardly; there may be that either by constraint, or with some base and disguised Design, while the Soul in the mean time is rough and turbulent and envenom'd; the Words may be softer than Oyl, while War is in the Heart, Psal. 55. 21. But the Word of God is a *Discerner and Judge of the Thoughts*, Heb. 4. 12.

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*and Intents of the Heart.* The Power of Men's Laws may bind a Man to the good Behaviour, but it is only the Power of God's Grace that will renew a right Spirit within him, *Psal. 51. 10.* That's it that makes the Tree good, and then the Fruit will be good. The God with whom we have to do, demands the Heart, looks at the Principle, and requires Truth in the inward parts, not only in the Duties of his own immediate Worship, that those be done in the Spirit, but also in the Duty we owe to our Neighbour, that that also be done with a pure Heart, and without dissimulation. The Word of Command which the Captain of our Salvation gives, is, Christians, take heed to your Spirits, *Mal. 2. 15.*

2. The Excellency of this Grace, it is in the sight of God of great price. It is really a precious Grace, for it is so in the sight of God, and we know that he can neither deceive nor be deceived. It is *πολυτελες* which is the same word that is used, *1 Tim. 2. 9.* for that costly Array, which is joyn'd with Gold and Pearls, *ἡ ἀντιπολυτελες*. Persons of Quality in their Ornaments affect not so much that which is Gay, as that which is Rich; not that which makes a Glittering, Gawdy Shew, and pleaseth Children and Fools, but that which is of intrinsick value, and recommends it self to the intelligent. A meek and quiet Spirit is such an Ornament, which hath not that Gaiety that is agreeable to the humor of a carnal World, but that real Worth which recommends it to the favour of God. 'Tis one of those Graces which are compar'd to the Powders of the Merchant, (*Cant. 3. 6.*) far fetch'd and dear bought, even with the precious Blood of the Lord Jesus. Herein we should every one labour,

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labour, and this we should be *ambitious* of, as <sup>2</sup> Cor. 3. 9. the greatest Honour, that Present or Absent, Living and Dying, we may be *accepted of the Lord*, and blessed be God it is a thing attainable, thro' the Mediator, from whom we have received *how to walk so as to please him*; we must walk with *meekness and quietness of Spirit*, for this is *in the sight of God of great price*. Therefore this mark of Honour is in a special manner put upon the Grace of Meekness, because it is commonly *despised* and look'd upon with Contempt by the Children of this World, as a piece of mean-spiritedness; but (however they be *termed* and *treated* now) they are happy, and will appear so shortly, whom God approveth of, and to whom he saith, *Well done good and faithful Servant*; for by his Judgment we must stand or fall eternally.

These words therefore will easily afford us this plain Doctrine;

*That Meekness and Quietness of Spirit is a very excellent Grace, which we should every one of us put on, and be adorned with.*

In the prosecution hereof we shall endeavour,

1. To shew *what this Meekness and Quietness of Spirit is.* And,

2. *What excellency there is in it.* And,

3. *Apply it.*

B 4 CHAP.

CHAP. I. The Nature of Meekness and  
Quietness of Spirit.

**M**EEKNESS and Quietness seem to import much the same thing, but the latter having something of Metaphor in it, will illustrate the former, and therefore we shall speak of them distinctly.

[1.] We must be of a meek Spirit. — *πῶς* qu. *facilis*: So the Criticks. Meekness is easiness of Spirit, not a sinful easiness to be debauched, as Ephraim's that willingly walked after the Commandment of the idolatrous Princes, *Hof.* 5. 11. Nor a simple easiness to be imposed upon and deceiv'd, as Rehoboam's, who when he was forty Years old is said to be young and tender-hearted, *2 Chron.* 13. 7. but a gracious easiness to be wrought upon by that which is good, as their's whose Heart of Stone is taken away, and to whom a Heart of Flesh is given. Meekness is easiness, for it accommodates the Soul to every Occurrence, and so makes a Man easy to himself and to all about him. The Latines call a meek Man *mansuetus*: qu. *manu assuetus*; us'd to the Hand, which alludes to the taming and reclaiming of Creatures wild by Nature, and bringing them to be tractable and familiar. Man's corrupt Nature hath made him like the wild Ass us'd to the Wilderness, or the swift Dromedary traversing her ways, *Jer.* 2. 23, 24. But the Grace of Meekness, when that gets Dominion in the Soul, alters the temper of it, brings it to hand, submits it to management, and now the Wolf dwells with the Lamb, and the Leopard lies down with the

*Jam.* 3. 7, 8.



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the Kid and a little Child may lead them; for Enemies are laid aside, and there's nothing to hurt or destroy, Isa, 11. 6, 9.

*Meekness* may be considered with respect both to God and to our *Brethren*; it belongs to both the Tables of the Law, and attends upon the First great Commandment, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God*, as well as the Second which is like unto it, *Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thy Self*; though its special reference is to the latter.

First, There is *Meekness* towards God, and it is the easie and quiet *Submission* of the Soul to his whole *Will*, according as he is pleased to make it known, whether by his *Word* or by his *Providence*.

1. It is the silent submission of the Soul to the *Word* of God: The Understanding bowed to every Divine Truth, and the Will to every Divine Precept; and both without *murmuring* or *disputing*. The Word is then an *engrafted Word* when it is received with *Meekness*, Jam. 1. 21. i. e. with a sincere willingness to be taught, and desire to learn. *Meekness* is a Grace that cleaves the *Stock*, and holds it open, that the Word as the *sap* may be *grafted* in; it breaks up the *Fallow Ground*, and makes it fit to receive the Seed, captivates the high thoughts, and lays the Soul like *White Paper* under God's Pen: When the *Day Spring* takes hold of the ends of the Earth, it is said to be *turned as Clay* to the Seal, Job 28. 12, 13, 14. *Meekness* doth in like manner dispose the Soul to admit the Rays of Divine Light, which before it rebelled against, it opens the Heart, as *Lydia* was opened, and sets us down with *Mary* at the feet of Christ, the learners

Place

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*Place and Posture* : Compare, Deut. 33. 3. The promise of Teaching is made to the Meek, because they are disposed to learn, the meek will he teach his way, Psal 25. 8, 9. The Word of God is Gospel indeed, Good tidings to the meek, Isa. 61. 1. they will entertain it and bid it welcome, the Poor in Spirit are Evangelized, Mat. 11. 5. and Wisdoms Alms are given to those that with

Prov. 8. 34. meekness, wait daily at her Gates, and like Beggars wait at the Posts of her Doors. The Language of this meekness is that of the Child Samuel, 1 Sam. 3. 9. Speak Lord for thy Servant beareth; and that of Joshua, who when he was in that high Post of Honour, giving command to Israel, and bidding Defiance to all their Enemies, his Breast filled with great and bold thoughts; yet upon the intimation of a Message from Heaven thus submits himself to it, Josh. 5. 14. What saith my Lord unto his Servant? And that of Paul, (and it was the first breath of the New Man) Acts 9. 6. Lord what wilt thou have me to do? And that of Cornelius, Acts 10. 33. And now we are all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God: And that of the good Man I have read of, who when he was going to hear the Word, used to say, Now, let the Word of the Lord come, and if I had six hundred Necks I would bow them all to the Authority of it. To receive the Word with meekness, is to be delivered into it, as into a Mold: it seems to be Pauls Metaphor, Rom. 6. 17. that form of Doctrine is, in which you were given up. Meekness softens the Wax that it may receive the impression of the Seal, whether it be for Doctrine or Reproof, for Correction or Instruction in Righteousness: It opens the Ear to Discipline,

filen.



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silenceth objections, and suppresseth the risings of the Carnal mind against the Word; consenting to the Law that it is good, and esteeming all the Precepts concerning all things to be right, even then when they give the greatest check to Flesh and Blood.

Miserere  
est non con-  
tradicare  
divina  
Scriptura  
sive intel-  
lecta si vi-  
tia percussis,  
sive non in-  
tellecta qua-  
si nos melius  
sapere posse-  
mus. Aug.  
l. 2.  
de doctrina  
Christi.

2. It is the silent submission of the Soul to the Providence of God, for that also is the Will of God concerning us.

(1.) When the Events of Providence are grievous and afflictive, displeasing to sense, and crossing our secular interests; meekness doth not only quiet us under them, but reconcile us to them, and inable us not only to bear, but to receive evil as well as good at the hand of the Lord; which is the excellent frame that Job argues himself into, Job. 2. 10. 'Tis to kiss the Rod, and even to accept of the punishment of our iniquity; taking all in good part that God doth: Not daring to strive with our Maker, no, nor desiring to prescribe to him, but Dumb and not opening the Mouth because God doth it. How meek was Aaron under the severe dispensation which took away his Sons with a particular mark of Divine Wrath, he held his peace, Levit. 10. 3. God was Sanctified, and therefore Aaron was Satisfied, and had not a word to say against it. Unlike to this was the Temper, or rather the Distemper of David, who then was not like a Man after Gods own Heart, when he was displeased, because the Lord had made a breach upon Uzza, 2 Sam. 6. 8. as if God must have ask'd David leave thus to assert the Honour of his Ark. When Gods Anger is kindled, ours must be stifled; such is the Law of Meekness, that whatsoever pleases God must not displease us: David was

in

## A Discourse concerning Meekness.

*Place and Posture* : Compare, Deut. 33. 3. The promise of Teaching is made to the Meek, because they are disposed to learn, the meek will he teach his way, Psal 25. 8, 9. The Word of God is Gospel indeed, Good tidings to the meek, Isa. 61. 1. they will entertain it and bid it welcome; the Poor in Spirit are Evangelized, Mat. 11. 5. and Wisdoms Alms are given to those that with

Prov. 8. 34. meekness, wait daily at her Gates, and like Beggars wait at the Posts of her Doors. The Language of this meekness is that of the Child Samuel, 1 Sam. 3. 9. Speak Lord for thy Servant beareth; and that of Joshua, who when he was in that high Post of Honour, giving command to Israel, and bidding Defiance to all their Enemies, his Breast filled with great and bold thoughts; yet upon the intimation of a Message from Heaven thus submits himself to it, Josh. 5. 14. What saith my Lord unto his Servant? And that of Paul, (and it was the first breath of the New Man) Acts 9. 6. Lord what wilt thou have me to do? And that of Cornelius, Acts 10. 33. And now we are all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God: And that of the good Man I have read of, who when he was going to hear the Word, used to say, Now let the Word of the Lord come, and if I had six hundred Necks I would bow them all to the Authority of it. To receive the Word with meekness, is to be delivered into it, as into a Mold: it seems to be Pauls Metaphor, Rom. 6. 17. that form of Doctrine is, in vases of clay, into which you were given up. Meekness softens the Wax that it may receive the impression of the Seal, whether it be for Doctrine or Reproof, for Correction or Instruction in Righteousness: It opens the Ear to Discipline, silen-

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silenceth objections, and suppresseth the risings of the *Carnal mind* against the Word; consenting to the Law that it is good, and esteeming all the Precepts concerning all things to be right, even then when they give the greatest check to *Flesh and Blood*.

Misereere  
est non con-  
tradicens  
divina  
Scriptura  
sive intel-  
lecta si vi-  
ria percussit,  
sive non in-  
tellecta qua-  
si nos melius  
sapere posse-  
mus. Aug.  
l. 2.  
de doctrina  
Christi.

2. It is the silent submission of the Soul to the Providence of God, for that also is the Will of God concerning us.

(1.) When the Events of Providence are grievous and afflictive, displeasing to sense, and crossing our secular interests; meekness doth not only quiet us under them, but reconcile us to them, and inable us not only to bear, but to receive evil as well as good at the hand of the Lord; which is the excellent frame that *Job* argues himself into, *Job. 2. 10.* 'Tis to kiss the Rod, and even to accept of the punishment of our iniquity; taking all in good part that God doth: Not daring to strive with our Maker, no, nor desiring to prescribe to him, but Dumb and not opening the Mouth because God doth it. How meek was *Aaron* under the severe dispensation which took away his Sons with a particular mark of Divine Wrath, he held his peace, *Levit. 10. 3.* God was Sanctified, and therefore *Aaron* was Satisfied, and had not a word to say against it. Unlike to this was the Temper, or rather the Distemper of *David*, who then was not like a Man after Gods own Heart, when he was displeased, because the Lord had made a breach upon *Uzza*, *2 Sam. 6. 8.* as if God must have ask'd *David* leave thus to assert the Honour of his Ark. When Gods Anger is kindled, ours must be stifled; such is the Law of Meekness, that whatsoever pleaseth God must not displease us: *David* was

in

in a better frame when he Penn'd the 56 Psalm, the Title of which, some think, speaks the calmness and submissiveness of his Spirit when the Philistines took him in Gath: It is upon *Jonath-elem-reckokim*, the silent Dove afar off: It was his calamity that he was afar off, but he was then as a silent Dove, (mourning perhaps, Isa. 38. 14.) but not murmuring, not struggling, not resisting, when seized by the Birds of Prey, and the Psalm he Pen'd in this frame was *Michtam*, a Golden Psalm. The Language of this meekness is that of *Eli*, 1 Sam. 3. 18. *It is the Lord*, and that of *David* to the same purpose, 2 Sam. 15. 25, 26. *Here I am, let him do to me as seemeth good unto him.* Not only, he can do what he will, subscribing to his Power, for who can stay his Hand: Or, He may do what he will, subscribing to his Sovereignty, for he giveth not account of any of his matters: Or, He will do what he will, subscribing to his Unchangableness, for he is in one mind, and who can turn him? But let him do what he will, subscribing to his Wisdom and Goodness, as *Hezekiah*, Isa. 39. 8. *Good is the word of the Lord which thou hast spoken.* Let him do what he will, for he will do what is best, and therefore if God should refer the matter to me, (saith the meek and quiet Soul) being well assured that he knows what is good for me better than I do for my my self, I would refer it to him again; he shall choose our Inheritance for us, Psal. 47. 4.

(2.) When the methods of Providence are dark and intricate, and we are quite at a loss what God is about to do with us, his way is in the sea and his Path in the great Waters, and his footsteps are not known, clouds and darkness are round about him,

him, a meek and quite Spirit aquiesceth in an assurance that all things shall *work together for good* to us, if we love God, though we cannot apprehend how or which way. It teacheth us to follow God with an implicit Faith, as *Abraham* did when he went out not knowing *whither he went*, but knowing very well *whom he followed*, *Heb. 11. 8.* and quieteth us with this, that tho' what he doth, we know not now, yet we shall know hereafter, *John 13. 7.* When poor *Job* was brought to that dismal plunge that he could no way trace the footsteps of the Divine Providence; but was almost lost in that Labyrinth, *Job. 23. 8, 9.* how quietly doth he sit down, *v. 10.* with this thought, *But he knows the way that I take, when he hath tryed me I shall come forth as Gold.*

Secondly, There is Meekness towards our Brethren, towards all Men, *Tir 3. 2.* and so we take it here. Meekness is especially conversant about the affection of Anger, not wholly to extirpate and eradicate it out of the Soul, that were to quench a Coal which sometime there is occasion for, even at Gods Altar, and to rebate and blunt the Edge even of our Spiritual Weapons with the which we are to carry on our Spiritual Warfare. But its office is to direct and govern this Affection, that we may be angry and not sin, *Ephes. 4. 26.*

Not *ira-*  
*bia*, but  
*irascen-*  
*bia*.

Anger is  
as *fortitu-*  
*dinis*.

Meekness in the School of the Philosophers is a Virtue consisting in a mean between the extremes of rash excessive Anger on the one Hand, and a defect of Anger on the other, in which *Aristotle* confesseth it very hard exactly to determine.

*Zohar. l. 4.*  
*c. 6.*

## A Discourse concerning Meekness.

*Meekness* in the School of Christ is one of the *Fruits of the Spirit*, Gal. 5. 22, 23. it is a *Grace* (both *gratis data*, and *gratum faciens*) wrought by the *Holy Ghost* both as a *Sanctifier* and as a *Comforter* in the Hearts of all true Believers, teaching and enabling them at all times to keep their passions under the Conduct and Government of *Religion* and right *Reason*: I say it is wrought in the Hearts of all true Believers, because, though there are some *rough* and *knotty* pieces that the Spirit works upon, whose *Natural Temper* is unhappily *sower* and *harsh*, which are long in the *squaring*; yet wheresoever there is true *Grace*, there is a disposition to strive against, and strength in some measure to conquer that *Distemper*. And tho' in this as in other *Graces* an absolute *Sinless* Perfection cannot be expected in this present state, yet we are to *labour* after it and *press* towards it.

More particularly: The Work and Office of *Meekness* is to enable us *prudently* to govern our own anger when at any time we are provok'd, and *patiently* to bear the Anger of others, that it may not be a provocation to us. The former is its Office especially in *Superiors*, the latter in *Inferiors*, and both in *Equals*.

*First*, *Meekness* teacheth us *prudently* to govern our own Anger, whenever any thing occurs that is provoking. As it is the work of *Temperance* to moderate our Natural Appetites towards those things that are *pleasing* to sense, so it is the work of *Meekness* to moderate our Natural Passions against those things that are *displeasing* to sense, and to guide and govern our *Resentments* of those things. Anger in the Soul is like *Mettle* in a Horse, good if it be well managed: Now  
*Meekness*



*Meekness* is the *Bridle*, as *Wisdom* is the *Hand* that gives Law to it; puts it into the right way, and keeps it of an even, steady and regular pace in that way, reducing it when it turns aside, preserving it in a due *Decorum*, and restraining it and giving it check, when at any time it grows headstrong and outrageous, and threatens mischief to our selves or others. It must thus be held in, like the *Horse and Mule with Bit and Bridle* (Psalm 32. 9.) lest it break the Hedge, run over those that stand in its way, or throw the Rider himself head-long. It is true of *Anger*, which we say of *Fire*, That it's a good *Servant*, but a *bad Master*; it's good on the *Hearth*, but bad in the *Hangings*. Now meekness keeps it in its place, sets banks to this *Sea*, and saith, *Hitherto thou shalt come and no further; here shall thy proud Waves be staid.*

*Non cognoscitur audacia nisi in Bello, amicus nisi in necessitate, sapiens nisi in ira.*  
Sent.  
Arab.

In reference to our own *Anger* when at any time we meet with the *Excitements* of it, the work of *MEEKNESS* is to do these four things.

1. To consider the *Circumstances* of that which we apprehend to be a *Provocation*, so as at no time to express our displeasure but upon due and mature *deliberation*. The Office of Meekness is to keep *Reason* upon the *Throne* in the *Soul*, as it ought to be, to preserve the *Understanding* clear and unclouded, the *Judgment* untainted and unbiassed in the midst of the greatest *Provocations*, so as to be able to set every thing in its true *Light*, and to see it in its own *Colour*, and to determine accordingly, as also to keep *silence* in the *Court*, that the *still small Voice*, in which the *Lord* is (as he was with *Elijah* at *Mount Horeb*, 1 *Kim.* 19. 12, 13.) may not be drown'd by the noise





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Three great *Dictates* of *Meekness* we find put together in one Scripture, *James* 1. 19. *Be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to Wrath*; which some observe to be couch'd in three proper Names of *Ishmael's* Son; *Gen.* 25. 14. *1 Chron.* 11. 30. (which *Bishop Prideaux* in the beginning of the Wars recommended to a Gentleman that had been his Pupil, as the summary of his Advice) *Mishma, Dumah, Massa*: the signification of which is, *Hear, Keep silence, Bear*: *Hear Reason, keep Passion silent*, and then you will not find it difficult to *bear* the Provocation.

It is said of the Holy one of *Israel*, when the *Egyptians* provok'd him, that he *weigh'd a Path to his Anger*: So the *Margin* reads it from the *Hebrew*, *Psal.* 78. 50. *Libravit semitam ira sua.* *Justice* first poised the Cause, and then *Anger* pour'd out the Vials. Thus *Gen.* 11. 5. *The Lord came down to see the Pride of the Babel-builders*, before he scatter'd them, and *Gen.* 18. 21. *He came down to see the Wickedness of Sodom*, before he overthrew it, though both were obvious and bare-faced, to teach us to consider before we are *angry*, and to judge before we pass Sentence, that herein we may be *followers of God*, as dear Children, and be *merciful* as our Father which is in Heaven is *merciful*.

We read, *James* 3. 13. of the *meekness of Wisdom*; for where there is not *Wisdom*, that *Wisdom* which is *profitable to direct*, that *Wisdom* of the *Prudent* which is *to understand his way*, *meekness* will not long be preserv'd. It is our *Rashness* and *Inconsideration* that betrays us to all the *Mischiefs* of an ungovern'd *Passion*, in the neck of which the *Reins* are laid (which should be kept in the Hand of Reason) and so we are

hurried

*In correptio-  
ne vitio-  
rum subesse  
menti debet  
Iracundia,  
non praeesse.  
Greg. in Job.  
l. 26. c. 36.  
Eccl. 10. 10  
Pro. 14. 8.  
Ratio id ju-  
dicare vult.  
quod aquum  
est, Ira id  
aquum vi-  
deri vult,  
quod judica-  
vit. Sen.*

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hurry'd upon a thousand *Precipices*. *Nehemiah* is a remarkable Instance of Prudence presiding in just resentments; He owns, *Neh. 5. 6, 7. I was very angry when I heard their Cry*, but that anger did not at all transgress the Laws of Meekness, for it follows, *Then I consulted with my self*, or, as the Hebrew hath it, *My heart consulted in me*. Before he express'd his Displeasure, he retir'd into his own bosom, took time for a sober thought upon the case, and then he rebuked the Nobles, in a very solid rational Discourse, v. 8, 9, 10, 11. and the success was good, v. 12, 13. In every Cause, when Passion presently demands Judgment, Meekness moves for further time, and will have the matter fairly argued, and Council heard on both sides:

When the injur'd *Levite* had pitch'd upon a very barbarous Course to irritate the Tribes of *Israel* (who commonly were too fiery to need a Spur) against the Men of *Gibeah*, yet withall he refer'd the matter to their deliberate Counsels, to teach us when our Hearts are meditating revenge, to do likewise, *Judg. 19. 30. so and so the matter is, consider of it, take advice, and then speak your minds*. When *Job* had any quarrel with his Servants, he was willing to admit a rational debate of the matter, and to hear what they had to say for themselves: For (saith he) *what shall I do when God riseth up? and withal, did not he that made me in the Womb, make him?* *Job 31. 13, 14, 15.* When our Hearts are at any time hot within us, we would do well to put that Question to our selves which God put to *Cain*, *Gen. 4. 6. Why am I wrath? Why am I angry at all? Why so soon angry? Why so very angry? Why so far transported and dispossest'd of my self*

self by my anger? What reason is there for all this? *Do I well to be angry for a Gourd?* that came up in a Night, and perished in a Night, Jona. 4. 9. Should I be touch'd to the quick by such a sudden and transient Provocation? Will not my cooler Thoughts correct these hasty Resentments, and therefore were it not better to check them now? Such are the reasonings of the *Meekness of Wisdom*.

2. The Work of Meekness is to *calm the Spirit, so as that the inward Peace may not be disturbed by any outward Provocation*. No doubt but a Man may express his *displeasure* against the *Miscarriages* of another, as much as at any time there is occasion for, without suffering his Resentments to recoil upon himself, and to put his own Soul into a hurry. What need a Man to *tear himself* (his Soul, so it is in the Hebrew) in his anger? Job 18. 4. Cannot we charge home upon our Enemies Camp, without the wilful disordering of our own Troops? Doubtless we may, if *Meekness* have the command, for that's a Grace which preserves a Man *Master* of himself, while he contends to be Master of another; And tho' there may be some firing in the *Out-works*, yet fortifies the *Heart*, the Main-Fort, the Inner-wards, against the assaults of Provocation which do us no great harm, while they do not rob us of our Peace, nor disturb the Rest of our Souls. As *Patience* in case of Sorrow, so *Meekness* in case of Anger keeps possession of the Soul (as the expression is, Luke 21. 19.) that we be not seiz'd of that Free-hold, and takes care when the Bell is up, that it do not overturn. The Drift of Christ's Farewell Sermon to his Disciples, we have in the first Words of it, *John, 14. 1.*

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*Let not your Hearts be troubled*——. It is the Duty and Interest of all good People, whatever happens, to keep Trouble from their Hearts, and to have them *even* and *sedate*, tho' the Eye (as Job expresseth it) should *continue* unavoidably in the Provocation of this World; Job 17.2. The Wicked (רשעים, the Turbulent and Unquiet, so the Word primarily signifies) are like the troubled Sea when it cannot rest, Isa. 57.20. but that Peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keeps the Hearts and Minds of all the Meek of the Earth. Meekness preserves the Mind from being ruffled, and discomposed, and the Spirit from being unhing'd by the Vanities and Vexations of this lower World: It stills the noise of the Sea, the noise of her Waves, and the Tumult of the Soul; permits not the Passions to crowd out in a disorderly manner, like a confused ungovern'd Rabble; but draws them out like the Train'd-bands, Rank and File, every one in his own order, ready to March, to Charge, to Fire, to Retreat, as Wisdom and Grace give the Word of Command.

It is said of the Just and Holy God, that he is Lord of his Anger, Nahum 1. 2. where we translate it, he is *furious* (perhaps not so well, for *Fury is not in him*, Isa. 27.4. but) he is רב און, the Lord of Anger, Compos ira, so some of the Criticks render it; he is Master of his own Anger, and we should labour to be so too. Which some Interpreters give as the sense of that which God said to Cain, Gen. 4.7. *Unto thee, or subject unto thee, shall be its Desire, and thou shalt rule over it; viz. over this Passion of Anger, which thou hast conceived in thy Bosom, thou shouldst and (if thou wouldst use the Grace offer'd to thee)*

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thee) thou mightest subdue and keep under these intemperate Heats, so as that they may not disturb the repose of thy Soul, nor break out into any Exorbitances.

3. Meekness will curb the Tongue, and keep the Mouth as with a Bridle when the Heart is hot, *Psal.* 39. 1, 2, 3. Even then when there may be occasion for a keenness of expression, and we are called to rebuke sharply, (*arrogans, cuttingly*) *Tit.* 1. 2. yet meekness forbids all fury and indecency of Language, and every thing that sounds like clamour and evil speaking, *Ephes.* 4. 31. The meekness of *Moses* was not at hand when he spoke that unadvised word, *Numb.* 20. 10. Hear now ~~the~~ *Rebels*, for which he was shut out of *Canaan*, though *Rebels* they were, and at that time very provoking. Men in passion are apt to give reviling Language, to call names, and those most senseless and ridiculous, to take the blessed Name of God in vain, and profane that; It is a wretched way by which the Children of Hell vent their passion at their beasts, their Servants, any person, or any thing that provokes them, to *Stoear at them*: Men in passion are apt to reveal secrets, to make rash vows and resolutions which afterwards prove a snare, and sometimes to slander and belye their brethren, and bring railing Accusations, and so to do the Devils work; and to speak that in their haste concerning others, (as *David*, *Psal* 116. 11. *All Men are lyars*) which they see cause to repent of at leisure. How brutishly did *Saul* in his passion call his own Son, the Heir apparent to the Crown, the Son of the perverse rebellious Woman, *1 Sam.* 20. 30. that is, in the filthy Dialect of Passion in our Days, *the Son of a Whore*;

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a fine credit to himself and his Family! *Raca* and *Thou Fool*, are instanced in by our Saviour as breaches of the Law of the Sixth Commandment, *Mat. 5. 22.* and the *Passion in the Heart* is so far from excusing such opprobrious Speeches, (for which purpose it is commonly alledg'd) that really it is that which gives 'em their malignity, they are the Smoke from that Fire, the Gall and Wormwood springing from that Root of Bitterness; and if

*Mat. 12. 36.* for every idle word that Men speak, much more for such wicked words as these, must they give an Account at the Day of Judgment. And as it is a reflection upon God to Kill; so it is to Curse Men that are made after the Image of God, *Jam. 3. 9.* (though never so much our inferiours) that is, to speak ill of them, or to wish ill to them.

This is the Disease, which Meekness prevents, and is in the Tongue a Law of Kindness, as the expression is, *Pro. 31. 26.* It is to the Tongue as the Helm is to the Ship (it is the Apostles comparison, *Jam. 3. 3, 4.*) not to silence it, but to guide it, to steer it wisely, especially when the Wind is high. If at any time we have conceiv'd a Passion, and thought evil, Meekness will lay the Hand upon the Mouth (as the Wise Man's Advice is, *Prov. 30. 32.*) to keep that evil thought from venting it self in any evil Word, reflecting upon God or our Brother. It will reason a matter in variance without noise, give a reproof without a reproach, convince a Man of his folly without calling him a Fool, will teach Superiours either to forbear threatening, *Eph. 6. 9.* or (as the Margin reads it) to moderate it, and will look diligently, lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble us, and thereby we and many others be defiled, *Heb. 12. 15.*

4. Meek-

*Mat. 12. 36.*  
In So: rate  
ira signum  
erat, vocem  
submittere,  
loqui parcius  
apparebat  
tunc illum  
sibi ob stare:  
Ita refert  
Seneca de  
ira. l. 3. c. 13  
Plutarch de  
non irascen-  
do.



4. Meekness will cool the Heat of Passion quickly, and not suffer it to continue. As it keeps us from being soon angry, so it teaches us when we are angry, to be soon pacified. The Anger of a meek man is like fire struck out of Steel, hard to be got out, but when it is out, soon gone. The wisdom that is from above, as it is gentle, and so not apt to provoke, so it is *easy to be intreated* when any provocation is given, James 3. 17. and hath the ear always open to the first proposals and overtures of satisfaction, submission, and reconciliation, and so the anger is turned away. He that is of a meek spirit will be forward to forgive injuries, and to put up affronts, and hath some excuse or other ready where with to extenuate and qualify the provocation, which an angry man, for the exasperating and justifying of his own resentments will industriously aggravate. It is but saying, there's no great harm done, or if there be, there was none intended, and peradventure it was an oversight, and so the offence being look'd at through that end of the Perspective which diminisheth, 'tis easily past by, and the Distemper being taken in time goes off quickly, the Fire is quenched before it gets head, and by a speedy interposal the Plague is stayed. While the world is so full of the sparks of Provocation, and there is so much tinder in the hearts of the best, no marvel if anger come sometimes into the bosom of a wise man, but it rests only in the bosom of Fools, Eccl. Reg. 3.

7. 9. Angry thoughts, as other vain thoughts, may crowd into the heart upon a sudden surprize, but meekness will not suffer them to lodge there, (Jer. 4. 14.) nor let the Sun go down upon the wrath, (Eph. 4. 26.) for if it do, there's danger

Tis a Maxim in the Law, In verbis dubiis benignior sententia est praesumenda. And semper fit praesumptio in meliorem partem. Vid. Alciat. de praesumpt.

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lest it rise *bloody* the next morning. Anger concocted becomes *Malice*; 'tis the wisdom of meekness by proper applications to discuss the *humour* before it comes to a head. One would have thought when *David* so heinously resented *Nabal's* abuse, that nothing less than the blood of *Nabal* and all his house could have quench'd his Heat, but it was done at a cheaper rate, and he shewed his Meekness, by yielding to the *diversion* that *Abigail's* Present and Speech gave him, and that with satisfaction and thankfulness; He was not only soon pacified, but blessed her, and blessed God for her that pacified him. God doth not contend for ever, neither is he always wroth; his anger endures but a moment, *Pf. 30. 5.* How unlike then are those to him whose *Sword* devours for ever, and whose anger burns like the *Coals of Juniper*? But the Grace of Meekness, if it fail of keeping the *Peace* of the Soul from being broken, yet fails not to recover it presently, and to make up the *Breach*, and upon the least transport steps in with *help in the time of need*, restores the Soul, puts it in frame again, and no great harm is done. Such as these are the *Atchievements* of Meekness, as it governs our own Anger.

Secondly, Meekness teacheth and enableth us *patiently to bear the Anger of others*, which instance of Meekness we have especially occasion for, in reference to our Superiors and Equals; commonly that which provokes Anger is Anger, as Fire kindleth Fire; now Meekness prevents that violent Collision which forceth out these Sparks, and softens at least one side, and so puts a stop to a great deal of Mischiefe; for it is the *second blow* that makes the *Quarrel*. Our first  
care



*care* should be to *prevent* the Anger of others, by giving no offence to any, but becoming all things to all Men, every one studying to *please his Neighbour for good to Edification*, Rom. 15. 2. and endeavouring as much as lies in us, to accommodate our selves to the temper of all with whom we have to do, and to make our selves acceptable and agreeable to them: How easie and comfortable should we make every Relation, and every instance of Conversation, if we were but better acquainted with this *Art of Obliging*. *Naphtalie's* Tribe, that was famous for giving *goodly Words* (Gen. 49. 21.) had the happiness of being satisfied with *Favour*, Deut. 33. 23. For every Man shall *kiss his Lips that giveth a right Answer*, Pro. 24. 26. In the Conjugal Relation, it is taken for granted, 1 Cor. 7. 33, 34. that the care of the Husband is to *please his Wife*; and the care of the Wife is to *please her Husband*; and where there is that mutual care, comfort cannot be wanting. Some People love to be cross-grain'd, and take a pleasure in *displeasing*, and especially contrive to provoke those whom they find passionate and easily provok'd, that (as he that giveth his *Neighbour drink, and putteth his Bottle to him*, Hab. 2. 15, 16.) they may look upon his shame to which in his Passion he expoileth himself, and so they *make a mock at sin*, and become like the *mad Man that casteth Fire-brands, Arrows and Death*; and saith, *Am not I in sport?* But the Law of Christ forbids us to *provoke one another*, Gal. 5. 26. (unless it be to *love and to good works*.) and enjoyns us (as it follows there, Chap. 6. 2.) to *bear one another's Burthens, and so to fulfil the Law of Christ*.

But

But because they must *rise betimes*, that will *please every Body*, and carry their *Cup even*, indeed that will *shed* no offence, our next care therefore must be so to behave our selves when others are angry, that we may not make *ill worse*. And this is one principal thing in which the *Younger* must submit themselves to the *Elder*; nay, in which all of us must be subject one to another, as our Rule is, *1 Pet. 5. 5*. And here Meekness is of use either to *injoyn Silence*, or to *indite a soft Answer*.

*Quid refert  
inter provoc-  
cantem &  
provocatam,  
nisi quod  
ille prior in  
maleficio  
deprehendi-  
tur, et ille  
posterior;  
nulla vero  
in maleficio  
ordinis ratio  
est. Tertul-  
do Divin.  
c. 10.*

1. *To injoyn Silence*. It is prescribed to Servants, *Tit. 2. 9*. to *please their Masters well in all things*, not *answering again*; for that must needs be *displeasing*: Better say *nothing* than say that which is provoking. When our Hearts are *hot within us*, it is good for us to *keep silence*, and *hold our Peace*: So David did, *Psal. 39. 2, 3*. and when he did speak, it was in prayer to God, and not in reply to the *wicked that were before him*. If the Heart be angry, angry words will but enflame it the more, as Wheels are heated by a rapid Motion. One Reflection and Repartee begets another, and the beginning of the Debate is like the *letting forth of Water*, hardly stop'd, when the least breach is made in the Dam; and therefore Meekness saith, By all means keep silence, and *leave it off before it be meddled with*. When a Fire is begun, it is good, if possible, to smother it, and so prevent it's spreading. Come on, *let us deal wisely*, and stifle it in the Birth, lest afterwards it prove too strong to be dealt with. Anger in the Heart is like those Books which were stow'd up in the Cellars in the Conflagration of London, which tho' they were extremely heated yet never took Fire, till they took Air many days

days after, where giving vent to the *Heat*, put them into a *Flame*. When the Spirits are in a *Ferment*, tho' it may be some present pain to check and suppress them, and the head-strong Passion hardly admit the *Bridle*, yet afterwards *it will be no grief of Heart to us.*

Those who find themselves wrong'd and ag-griev'd, think they may have leave to speak, but it's better be silent than speak amiss, and make work for Repentance. At such a time he that holds his *Tongue*, holds his *Peace*; and if we soberly reflect, we shall find that we have been often the worse for our *speaking*, but seldom the worse for our *silence*. † This must be especially remembered and observ'd by as many as are under the *Yoke*; who will certainly have most comfort in Meekness, and Patience, and silent Submission not only to the Good and Gentle, but also to the Froward. It is good in such cases to remember our place, and if the Spirit of a Ruler rise up against us, not to leave that, i. e. not to do any thing unbecoming that, for yielding *pacifical* great Offences, Eccl. 10. 4. We have a common Proverb that teacheth us this, *When thou art the Hammer, knock thy fill, but when thou art the Anvil, lye thou still.* For it is the posture thou art cut out for, and which best becomes thee.

† Complures vidi loquendo peccatum incidisse, vix quinquam tacendo: ideoq; tacere nosse quam loqui difficilius est. Ambr. de Offic. l. 1. c. 2.

Locus tuus patientia est, locus tuus sapientia est, locus tuus ratio est, et sedatio indignationis. Ambr. ubi supra. c. 21.

If others be angry at us without Cause, and we have never so much Reason on our side, yet oftentimes it is best to adjourn our own Vindication, (though we think it necessary) till the Passion be over; for there is nothing said or done in Passion but it may be better said, and better done afterwards. When we are calm, we shall be likely to say it and do it in a better manner, and when

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when our Brother is calm, we shall be likely to say it, and do it to better purpose. A needful Truth spoken in a Heat may do more hurt than good, and offend rather than satisfy. The Prophet himself forbore even a Message from God, when he saw *Amaziah* in a Passion; *2 Chr. 25. 16.* Sometimes it may be adviseable to get some one else to say that for us, which is to be said, rather than say it our selves. However, we have a righteous God, to whom (if we do in a meek silence suffer our selves to be run down unjustly) we may commit our Cause, and having his Promise that he will bring forth our Righteousness as the Light, and our Judgment as the Noon-day, *Psal. 37. 6.* We had better leave it in his Hands, than undertake to manage it our selves, lest that which we call clearing our selves, God should call quarrelling with our Brethren. David was greatly provok'd by those that sought his hurt, and spoke mischievous things against him, and yet (saith he) I as a deaf Man heard not, I was as a dumb Man that openeth not his Mouth, *Pf. 38. 13.* and why so? 'twas not because he wanted something to say, or because he knew not how to say it; but *v. 15.* because in thee, O Lord, do I hope, thou wilt hear, O Lord my God: And what need I hear and God hear too? His concerning himself in the matter supercedes Ours, and he is not only engaged in Justice to own every, righteous, but wronged Cause, but he is further engaged in Honour to appear for those that in obedience to the Law of Meekness commit their Cause to him, and trust him with it. If there be any vindication, or avenging necessary (which infinite Wisdom is the best Judge of) he can do it better than we can, and therefore give place unto

unto Wrath, Rom. 12. 19. *i. e.* to the Judgment of God, which is according to Truth and Equity, make room for him to take the Seat, and do not you step in before him: 'Tis fit our wrath should stand by to give way to his; for the *wrath of a Man*, engageth not the *Righteousness of God*, for him: Even just *Appeals* made to him, Jam. 1. 20. if they be made in *Passion*, are not admitted into the Court of Heaven, being not duly put in; that one thing is *Error* sufficient to overrule them: Let not therefore those that do well and suffer for it, spoil their own Vindication by mis-timing and mis-managing it, but tread in the steps of the Lord Jesus, *Who when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffer'd he threatned not, but was as a Lamb dumb before the Shearers*; and so committed himself to him that judgeth righteously. It is indeed a great piece of *Self-denial* to be silent, when we have enough to say, and provocation to say it; but if we do thus control our *Tongues* out of a pure regard to Peace and Love, it will turn to a good account, and will be an evidence for us that we are Christ's Disciples, having learn'd to deny our selves. It is better by silence to yield to our Brother, who is, or hath been, or may be our Friend, than by angry speaking to yield to the Devil, who hath been, and is, and ever will be our sworn Enemy.

2. To indite a soft Answer. This Solomon commends as a proper expedient to turn away wrath, while grievous words do but stir up anger, Pro. 15. 1. When any speak angrily to us, we must pause a while, and study an Answer, which both for the Matter and Manner of it, may be mild and gentle. This brings Water while peevishness

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ness and provocation would but bring Oil to the Flame. Thus is *Death and Life in the Power of the Tongue*; it is either healing or killing, an Antidote or a Poison, according as it's used. When the Waves of the Sea beat on a Rock, they batter, and make a noise, but a soft Sand receives them silently, and returns them without damage. A soft Tongue is a wonderful Specifick, and hath a very strange Vertue in it; for, Solomon saith, it *breaks the Bone*, Pro. 25. 15. that is, it *qualifies* those that were provok'd, and makes them pliable; it *heaps Coals of Fire* upon the Head of an Enemy, not to burn him, but to melt him, Pro. 25. 21, 22. Hard words (we say) break no Bones, but it seems soft ones do (and yet do no harm) as they calm an angry Spirit and prevent its Progress, breaking it as we do a Flint upon a Cushion. A Stone that falls on a Wool-pack rests there, and rebounds not to do any further Mischief, such is a meek Answer to an angry Question. It is observed in that rencounter which was between the Royal Tribe, and the other ten, that the words of the Men of Judah were fiercer than the words of the Men of Israel, 2 Sam. 14. 43. When Passion is up, that God whose Eyes are upon all the ways of Men, takes notice who speaks fiercely, and sets a mark upon them.

The good effect of a soft Answer, and the ill consequents of a peevish one, are observable in the Stories of Gideon and Jephthah: Both of them in the day of their Triumphs over the Enemies of Israel, were causelessly quarrel'd with by the Ephraimites (an angry sort of People it seems \*) who took it very heinously when the danger was past; and the Victory was won, that they had not been call'd upon to engage in the Battle.

\* Hence we read of the Envy of Ephraim, 44. 11. 13.



Battle; *Gideon* pacified them with a soft Answer, *Judg.* 8. 2. *What have I done now in comparison of you?* magnifying their Achievements, and lessening his own, speaking honourably of them, and meanly of himself; *Is not the glean- ing of the Grapes of Ephraim, better than the Vintage of Abiezar?* In which Reply it's hard to say whether there was more of *Wit* or *Wis- dom*; And the effect was very good; the *Ephrai- mites* were pleased, their Anger turned away, a Civil War prevented; and no Body could think the worse of *Gideon* for his Mildness and Self- denial; but on the contrary, that he won more true Honour, by this Victory over his own Passion, than he did by his Victory over all the Host of *Midian*; for he that *bath Rule over his own Spirit, is better than the Mighty*, *Pro.* 16. 32. The Angel of the Lord had pronounced him a *migh- ty Man of Valour*, *Judg.* 6. 12. and this his tame submission did not at all derogate from that part of his Character. But *Jephthah* (who by many instances appears to be a Man of a rough and hasty Spirit, tho' enroll'd among the emi- nent Believers, *Heb.* 11. 32. for all good People are not alike happy in their Temper.) When the *Ephraimites* in like manner pick a Quarrel with him, he rallies them, upbraids them with their Cowardice, boasts of his own Courage, chal- lenges them to make good their Cause, *Jud.* 12. 2, 3. they retort a scurrillous Reflection upon *Jephthah's* Country (as it's usual with Men in Passion to taunt and fear one another) *Ye Gila- dites are Fugitives*, verse 4. From Words they go to Blows, and so great a matter doth this little Fire kindle, that there goes no less to quench the Flame, than the Blood of two and forty thousand



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thousand Ephraimites, v. 6. All which had been haply prevented if *Jephthah* had had but half as much *meekness* in his heart, as he had *reason* on his side.

A *soft Answer* is the Dictate and Dialect of that Wisdom which is from above, which is *peaceable, gentle, and easie to be intreated*: And to recommend it to us, we have the pattern of *good men*, as that of *Jacob's* Carriage to *Esau*, tho' a Brother offended, who is so hard to be won, yet as he had prevail'd with God by Faith and Prayer, so he prevail'd with his Brother by Meekness and Humility: We have also the Pattern of *good Angels*, who even then when a rebuke was needful, yet durst not turn it into a railing *Accusation*, durst not give any reviling Language, no not to the Devil himself, but refer'd the matter to God, *The Lord rebuke thee*, as that passage, *Jude* ver. 9. is commonly understood. Nay, we have the Pattern of a *good God*, who tho' he could plead against us with his great Power, yet gives soft Answers: witness his dealing with *Cain*, when he was wroth and his countenance fallen, reasoning the case with him, *Gen. 4. 6, 7. Why art thou wroth?— If thou dost well, shalt not thou be accepted?* With *Jonah* likewise, when he was so discontented, *Jon. 4. 4, 9. Dost thou well to be angry?* This is represented in the Parable of the Prodigal Son, by the carriage of the Father towards the Elder Brother that was so high, and humorsom, so angry that he would not come in. The Father did not say, Let him stay out then, but he came himself and intreated him, (when he might have interposed his Authority and commanded him) and said, *Son, thou art ever with me, Luke 15. 28, 31.* When a passionate

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ate Parley is begun, there is a Plague broke out, the meek Man like *Aaron* takes his Censer with the Incense of a *soft Answer*, steps in seasonably and stays the Plague.

This *soft Answer*, in case we have committed a *Fault* (tho' perhaps not culpable to that degree that we are charged with) must be *Penitent*, *Humble* and *Submissive*, and we must be ready to acknowledge our Error, and not stand in it, or insist upon our own Vindication, but rather aggravate than excuse it, rather condemn than justify our selves: It will be a good evidence of our Repentance towards God, to humble our selves to our Brethren, whom we have offended, as it will be also a good evidence of our being forgiven of God if we be ready to forgive those that have offended us: And such yielding pacifish great Offences. Meekness teacheth us as oft as we trespass against our Brother to turn again and say, *I repent*, Luke 17. 4. An acknowledgment in case of a wilful Affront is perhaps as necessary to pardon, as (we commonly say) *Restitution* is in case of *wrong*:—And so much for the opening of the *Nature* of *Meekness*, which yet will receive further light from what follows.

[ 2. ] We must be of a quiet Spirit. Quietness is the evenness, the composure, and the rest of the Soul, which speaks both the nature and the excellency of the Grace of Meekness. The greatest Comfort and Happiness of Man is sometimes set forth by *Quietness*. That Peace of Conscience which Christ hath left for a Legacy to his Disciples, that present *Sabbatism* of the Soul, which is an earnest of the Rest that remains for the People of God, is call'd, *Quietness* and *Assurance*

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urance for ever, and is promised, as the effect of Righteousness, Isa. 32. 17. and it follows, v. 18. *My People shall dwell in quiet resting-places.* So graciously hath God been pleased to twist *Interests* with us, as to enjoin the same thing under the Notion of a *Duty*, which he proposeth and promiseth under the Notion of a *Privilege*. Justly may we say, that we serve a good Master, whose Yoke is *easy*, Matth. 11. 30. 'tis *easy*, not only *easy*, but *sweet*, and *gracious* (so the word signifies) not only tolerable, but amiable and acceptable: *Wisdom's ways* are not only pleasant, but *pleasantness* it self, and all her paths are *Peace*, Pro. 3. 17. It is the Character of the Lord's People both in respect of *Holiness* and *Happiness*, that (however they be branded as the *Troublers of Israel*) they are the *Quiet in the Land*, Psal. 33. 20. If every Saint be made a *Spiritual Prince* (Rev. 1. 6.) having a *Dignity* above others, and a *Dominion* over himself, surely he is like that *Seraiah*, Jer. 51. 59. a *quiet Prince*. It is a *Reign with Christ*, the transcendent *Solomon*, under the influence of whose *Golden Scepter* there is abundance of *Peace as long as the Moon endures*, yea, and longer, *for of the increase of his Government and Peace, there shall be no end.* *Quietness* is in the Text recommended to us as a *Grace*, which we should be endued with, and as a *Duty* which we should practise. In the midst of all the *Affronts* and *Injuries* that are, or can be offer'd us, we must keep our *Spirits sedate*, and undisturbed, and evidence by a *calm* and *even*, and *regular behaviour*, that they are so. This is *Quietness*. Our Saviour hath pronounced the *Blessing of Adoption* upon the *Peacemakers*, Mar. 5. 9. *inward*, those that are for *Peace*,

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Peace, as David professeth himself to be, *Psal.* 110. 7. in opposition (such an opposition as Meekness is capable of) to those that *delight in War*, *Psal.* 68. 30. Now if Charity be for *Peace-making*, surely this *Charity begins at home*, and is for making Peace there in the first place; Peace in our own Souls, is some conformity to the example of the *God of Peace*, who tho' he doth not always give Peace on this Earth, yet evermore *makes Peace in his own high place*, *Job* 25. v. 2. This some think, is the primary intention of that *Peace-making*, on which Christ there *commands the Blessing*: It is to have strong and hearty affections to Peace, to be *peaceable-minded*, for *making* in Scripture notes the bent and inclination of the Soul; as to make a Lye, is to be given to Lying; so to make Peace, is to be addicted to Peace; to have a disposition in the Soul ready to *command the Peace*, when there is at any time, any kind of disturbance. In a word; *Quietness of Spirit* is the Soul's *stillness*, and silence, from intending Provocation to, or *resenting* Provocation from any with whom we have to do.

Dr. Ham-  
mond. Pract-  
later. p. 125

The word hath something in it of a Metaphor, which we would not *chase*, but fairly *prosecute*, for the Illustration of the Grace of Meekness.

1. We must be quiet as the Air is quiet from Winds. Disorderly Passions are like stormy Winds in the Soul, they toss and hurry it, and often split, or strand, or overset it; they move it as the Trees of the Wood are mov'd with the Wind; 'tis the Prophets comparison, *Isa.* 7. 2. and is an apt Emblem of a Man in Passion. Now Meekness restrains these Winds, saith to them, Peace,

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be still, and so preserves a calm in the Soul, and makes it conformable to him, who hath the Winds in his Fists, and is herein to be praised, that even the stormy Winds fulfil his Word. A brisk Gale is often useful, especially to the Ships of Desire, as the Hebrew phrase is, Job 9. 26. so there should be in the Soul such a warmth and vigor as will help to speed us to the desired Harbour. It is not well to lye Wind-bound in dulness and indifferency. But Tempests are perillous, yea, tho' the Wind be in the right Point; so are strong Passions, even in good Men, they both hinder the Voyage, and hazzard the Ship: Such a Quickness as consists with Quietness, is what we should all labour after, and Meekness will contribute very much towards it, it will silence the Noise, controul the Force, moderate the Impetus, and correct all undue and disorderly Transports. What manner of Grace is this, that even the VVinds and the Seas obey it? If we will but use the Authority which God hath given us over our own Hearts, we may keep the winds of Passion under the command of Religion and Reason, and then the Soul is quiet, the Sun shines, all's pleasant and serene and smiling, and the Man sleeps sweetly and safely on the Lee side. We make our Voyage among Rocks and Quick-sands, but if the Weather be calm, we can the better steer so as to avoid them, and by a due care and temper hit the mean between extremes, whereas he that suffers these VVinds of Passion to get head, and spreads a large Sail before them, while he shuns one Rock, splits upon another, and is in danger of being drown'd in destruction and perdition, by many foolish and hurtful Lusts, especially those whence VVars and Fightings come.

*Aolus sis  
affectuum  
suorum.  
Reiremb.*

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2. We must be quiet as the Sea is quiet from Waves. The wicked (whose sin and punishment both lye in the unruliness of their own Souls, and the Violence and Disorder of their own Passions, which perhaps will not be the least of their eternal Torments) are compared to the troubled Sea, when it cannot rest, whose Waters cast forth Mire and Dirt, Isa. 57. 20. that is, they are uneasy to themselves, and to all about them, *raging Waves of the Sea* (so they are described, Jude 13.) *foaming out their own shame*; their *hard Speeches* which they speak against God, ver. 15. and *Dignities*, ver. 8. and *things which they know not*, ver. 10. their *great swelling words*, ver. 16. and *mockings*, ver. 18. these are the *shame* they foam out. Now Meekness is a Grace of the Spirit, that moves upon the face of the Waves and quiets them, smooths the ruffled Sea, and stills the Noise of it, (tis now *mare pacificum*) it casts forth none of the Mire and Dirt of Passion. The Waves mount not up to the Heaven in Proud and Vain-glorious Boastings; go not down to the depths to scrape up vile and scurrilous Language; no *reeling* to and fro, as Men overcome with Drink, or with their own Passion; which is all one, (for if Wine be a *mock*, and *strong Drink* *raging*, Pro. 20. 1. Anger is no less so,) none of that transport which brings them to their wits end; I refer to the Psalmist's description of a Storm, Ps. 107. 26, 27. but as it follows there, v. 30. *They are glad because they are quiet, so he bringeth them to their desired Haven.* This calmness and evenness of Spirit makes our passage over the Sea of this World safe and pleasant, quick and speedy towards the desired Harbour, and is amiable and

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exemplary in the Eyes of others, such a path doth the meek and quiet Christian make to shine after him. One would think the deep to be boary.

3. We must be quiet as the Land is quiet from War. It was the observable Felicity of Aſa's Reign, that in his days the Land was quiet, 2Chr. 14. 1, 5. In the preceding Reigns there was no peace to him that went out, or to him that came in, whether outward-bound or home-wards bound, they were exposed to great vexations, ch. 15. 5. but now the rumors and allarms of War were still'd, and the people deliver'd from the noise of Archers at the place of drawing Waters, as when the Land had rest in Deborah's time, Jud. 5. 11. Such a quietness there should be in the Soul, and such a quietness there will be where Meekness sways the Scepter. A Soul enflamed with Wrath and Passion upon all occasions is like a Kingdom embroil'd in War, in a Civil War, subject to continual Frights, and Losses, and Perils, Deaths and Terrors in their most horrid Shapes, walk triumphantly, Sleeps disturb'd, Families broken, Friends suspected, Enemies fear'd, Laws silenced, Commerce ruin'd, Business neglected, Cities wasted, such heaps upon heaps, doth ungovern'd Anger lay when it is let loose in the Soul. *Jusq; datum sceleri, &c.* But Meekness makes these Wars to cease, breaks the Bow, cuts the Spear, sheaths the Sword, and in the midst of a Contentious World preserves the Soul from being the Seat of War, and makes Peace in those Borders. The rest of the Soul is not disturb'd, it's Comforts not plunder'd, it's Government not disorder'd, the Laws of Religion and Reason rule, and not the Sword: The Tra-

ding.



ding Duties are not interrupted, neither its Communion with God, nor its Communion with the Saints intercepted, no *breaking in* of Temptation, no *going out* of Corruption, no *complaining in the Streets*, no occasion given, no occasion taken to complain. *Happy is the Soul that is in such a case*, Psal. 144. 14, 15. The words of such wise men are heard in quiet, more than the cry of him that ruleth among Fools, and this wisdom is better than weapons of war, Eccl. 9. 17, 18. This is the *Quietness* we should every one of us labour after, and it is what we might attain to, if we would but more support and exercise the Authority of our Graces (which are as the *Commissioners of the Peace*) and guide and controul the power of our Passions (which are as the *Commissioners of Array*) in our Souls.

4. We must be quiet as the Child is quiet after weaning. It is the Psalmist's comparison, Psal. 131. 2. *I have behaved* (or rather, *I have composed*, so Ainsworth reads it) *and quieted my Self*, (my Soul, Heb. for our Souls are our selves, and our principal care must be concerning them) *as a Child that is weaned of his Mother, my Soul is even as a weaned Child*. A Child while it is in the weaning perhaps is a little cross, and froward, and troublesome for a time, but when it is perfectly wean'd, how quickly doth it forget the Breast, and accommodate its self to its new way of feeding; Thus a quiet Soul, if provok'd by the denial or loss of some Creature Comfort or Delight, that hath been dear, quiets it self, and doth not fret at it, nor perplex it self with anxious Cares, how to live without it, but composeth it self to make the best of that which is. If Wormwood be put upon the Breasts, which we

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have call'd the Breasts of our Consolation, it is but to make us indifferent to them, and we must set our selves to answer that Intention, and fit loose to them accordingly. And this Holy Indifferency to the Delights of Sense, is (like the weaning of a Child) a good step taken towards the *perfect Man*, the *measure of the Stature of the fulness of Christ*. A Child newly weaned

Yet corrupt Passions appear betimes. *Vidi zelantem parvulum qui intuebatur pallidus amaro aspectu colla sternum suum.* Aug. Conf. 1, 7.

*Et si cito pueri inter se moventur, facile sedantur & majori suavitate in se recurrunt; nesciunt se subdole artificioseque trahere.* Amb. de Off. 1. c. 21.

is free from all the uneasiness and disquietment of Care, and Fear, and Envy, and Anger, and Revenge: How undisturbed are its Sleeps, and even then its Dreams pleasant and smiling? How easie its Days? How quiet its Nights? If put into a little pett now and then, how soon is it over, the Provocation forgiven, the Sense of it forgotten, and both bury'd in an innocent Kiss? Thus, if ever we would enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, must we be *converted* from Pride, Envy, Ambition and Strife for precedency, and must *become like little Children*. So our Saviour hath told us (who, even after his Resurrection, is call'd, *The Holy Child Jesus*, Act. 4. 27.) *Matth. 18. 3.* And even when we have put away other *childish Things*, yet still in *Malice* we must be *Children*, 1 Cor. 14. 20. And as for the Quarrels of others, in all Broils and Heats, a meek and quiet Christian endeavours to be as *disinterested*, and as little *engaged* as a weaned Child in the Mothers Arms, that is not capable of such angry Resentments.

This is that *Meekness* and *Quietness of Spirit*, which is here recommended to us, such a Command and Composure of the Soul, as that it be not unhinged by any Provocation whatsoever, but all its Powers and Faculties preserved in due Temper, for the just discharge of their respective Offices.

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Offices. In a word; *Put off all Wrath, and Anger, and Malice,* (those corrupted Limbs of the old Man) pluck up and cast away those Roots of Bitterness, and stand upon a constant Guard against all the Exorbitances of your own Passion, and then you will soon know, to your comfort, better than I can tell you, what it is to be of a *Meek and Quiet Spirit.*

CHAP. II. *The Excellency of Meekness and Quietness of Spirit.*

THE very opening of this Cause, one would think, were enough to carry it, and the explaining of the *Nature of Meekness and Quietness*, should suffice to recommend it to us: Such an amiable Sweetness doth there appear in it, upon the very first View; if we look upon this *Beauty*, we cannot but be *enamour'd* with it. But because of the Opposition that there is in our corrupt Hearts to this, as to other the Graces of the Holy Spirit, I shall endeavour more particularly to shew the *Excellency* of it, that we may be brought, if possible, to be in *love* with it, and to submit our Souls to the *charming Power* of it.

It is said, *Pro. 17. 27. That a Man of understanding is of an excellent Spirit.* — He is קר ריח (so the Chetib, though the Keri, which our Translation follows, reads it קר) *frigidus Spiritu*, so Tremellius, he is of a cool Spirit; put them together, and it teacheth us, *That a cool Spirit is an excellent Spirit*, and he is a *Man of understanding* that is acted and govern'd by such a Spirit. The Text tells us (what need we more?) that

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that it <sup>is</sup> in the sight of God of great price, and we may be sure that's precious indeed which is so in God's sight; that's good, very good which he pronounceth so, for his Judgment is according to Truth, and sooner or later he will bring all the World to be of his Mind; for as he hath decided it, so shall our Doom be, and he will be justified when he speaketh, and clear when he judgeth.

The excellency of a meek and quiet Spirit, will appear, if we consider the *Credit* of it, and the *Comfort* of it, the present *Profit* there is by it, and the *Preparedness* there is in it, for something further.

[1.] Consider how *Creditable* a meek and quiet Spirit is. *Credit* and *Reputation* is a thing which most People are very sensibly touch'd with the Ambition of, tho' few consider aright either what it is, or what is the right way of obtaining it, and particularly it is little believed what a great deal of true honour there is in the Grace of *Meekness*, and what a sure and ready way, mild and quiet Souls take to gain the good word of their Master, and of all their Fellow-Servants that love our Master, and are like him.

Let us see what *Credit* there is in *Meekness*.

1. There is in it the credit of a *Victory*. What a great Figure do the Names of high and mighty Conquerors make in the Records of Fame? How is their *Conduct*, their *Valor*, and their *Success* more than either cry'd up and celebrated? But if we will believe the Word of Truth, and pass a Judgment upon things according to the Rules of that, He that is slow to anger is better than the

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*the Mighty, and he that ruleth his Spirit, than he that taketh a City, Pro. 16. 32. Behold a greater than Alexander or Cesar is here: The former of which some think lost more true Honour by yielding to his own ungovern'd Anger, than he got by all his Conquests. No triumphant Chariot so easy, so safe, so truly glorious, as that in which the meek and quiet Soul rides over all the Provocations of an injurious World, with a gracious unconcernedness: No train so splendid, so noble, as that train of Comforts and Graces, which attend this Chariot. The Conquest of an unruly Passion is more honourable, than the Conquest of an unruly People, for it requires more true Conduct: It is easier to kill an Enemy without us, which may be done at a Blow, than to Chain up and govern an Enemy within us which requires a constant even steady Hand, and a long and regular Management. It was more the Honour of David to yield himself conquer'd by Abigail's Perswasions, than to have made himself a Conqueror over Nabal and all his House. A rational Victory must needs be allowed more honourable to a rational Creature than a brutal one. This is a cheap, safe and unbloody Conquest that doth no Body any harm, no Lives, no Treasures sacrificed to it, the Glory of these Triumphs, not stain'd as others use to be with Funerals: Every Battle of the Warrior (saith the Prophet, Isa. 9. 5.) is with confused noise, and Garments roll'd in Blood, but this shall be with burning, even by the Spirit of the Lord of Hosts; as a Spirit of Judgment, and a Spirit of Burning. Nay, in meek and quiet suffering, we are more than Conquerors, thro' Christ that loved us, Rom. 8. 37. Conquerors with little loss, we lose*

lose nothing but the gratifying of a base Lust, Conquerors with great gain, the Spoils we divide are very rich, the Favour of God, the Comforts of the Spirit, the Forecasts of everlasting Pleasures, these are *more glorious and excellent than the Mountains of Prey*. We are *more than Conquerors*; that is, *Triumphers*, we live a Life of Victory, every day a day of Triumph in the meek and quiet Soul.

Meekness is a Victory over *our Selves*, and the Rebellious Lusts in our own Bosoms; 'tis the quieting of *intestine Broils*, the stilling of an *Insurrection* at Home, which is oftentimes more hard to do, than to resist a foreign *Invasion*. It is an effectual Victory over *those that injure us*, and make themselves Enemies to us, and is often a means of winning their Hearts. The Law of Meekness is, *If thine Enemy hungey, feed him, if he thirst, give him drink*, Propina illi, not only give him drink, (which is an Act of Charity) but *drink to him*, in token of Friendship, and true Love, and Reconciliation, and *in so doing thou shalt heap Coals of Fire upon his Head*, not to consume him, but to melt and mollifie him, that he may be cast into a new mould; and thus while the angry and revengeful Man, that will bear down all before him with a high hand is overcome of evil, the patient and forgiving overcome evil with good, Rom. 12. 20, 21. and forasmuch as their ways please the Lord, he maketh even their Enemies to be at Peace with them, Pro. 16. 7. Nay, Meekness is a Victory over Satan the greatest Enemy of all: What Conquest can sound more great than that? It is written for Caution to us all, and it reflects honour upon those who through Grace overcome, that *we wrestle not against*



against Flesh and Blood, but against Principa-  
 lities and Powers, and the Rulers of the darkness  
 of this World, Eph. 6. 12. The magnifying of the  
 Adversary magnifies the Victory over him; such  
 as these are the meek Man's vanquish'd Enemies,  
 the spoils of these are the Trophies of his Victory. Ἐν τῷ  
 ἰσχυρῷ  
 καὶ ἀδύνα-  
 τῳ, πρὸς  
 αὐτὸν καὶ  
 κατὰ  
 λατρίαν,  
 πρὸς ἀδύ-  
 νατον καὶ  
 ἀνίκη-  
 τόν, ὁ  
 Χρῆστος.  
 Rom. 19  
 It is the design of the Devil, that great Deceiver  
 and Destroyer of Souls, that is baffled, 'tis his  
 attempt that is defeated, his assault that is re-  
 puls'd by our Meekness and Quietness. Our  
 Lord Jesus was more admired for his controul-  
 ing and commanding the *unclean Spirits*, than  
 for any other of the Cures he wrought: Un-  
 ruly Passions are *unclean Spirits*, Legions of  
 which some Souls are possess'd with, and despe-  
 rate outrageous work they make: The Soul be-  
 comes like that miserable Creature, (Mark 5.  
 3, 4, 5. that cry'd and cut himself, or that, Mark  
 9. 22. who was so often cast into the Fire, and  
 into the Waters. The meek and quiet Soul is  
 through Grace a Conqueror over these Enemies,  
 their fiery darts are quenched by the shield of  
 Faith, Satan is in some measure trodden under  
 his Feet, and the Victory will be compleat  
 shortly, when he that overcometh shall sit down  
 with Christ upon his Throne, even as he overcame  
 and is set down with the Father upon his Throne;  
 where he still appears in the Emblem of his  
 Meekness, a Lamb as it had been slain, Rev. 5. 6.  
 And upon Mount Zion, at the Head of his Hea-  
 venly Hosts, he appears also as a Lamb, Rev. 14. 1.  
 Such is the Honour that Meekness hath in those  
 higher Regions.

2. There is in it, the Credit of a Beauty. The  
 Beauty of a thing consists in the Symmetry,  
 Harmony and Agreeableness of all the Parts:  
 Now



*A Discourse concerning Meekness.*

Now what is Meekness, but the Souls Agreement with it self? 'Tis the joynt Concurrence of all the Affections to the universal Peace and Quiet of the Soul, every one regularly acting in its own Place and Order, and so contributing to the common good. Next to the *Beauty of Holiness*, which is the Souls Agreement with God, is the *Beauty of Meekness*, which is the Soul's Agreement with it Self. Behold how good and how pleasant a thing it is, for the Powers of the Soul thus to dwell together in Unity, the Reason knowing how to Rule, and the Affections at the same time knowing how to Obey. Exorbitant Passion is a Discord in the Soul: It is like a Tumor in the Face, which spoils the Beauty of it: Meekness scatters the Humor, binds down the swelling, and so prevents the Deformity, and preserves the Beauty. This is one instance of the comeliness of Grace, thro' my comeliness (saith God to Israel, Ezek. 16.14.) which I had put upon thee. It puts a charming Loveliness and Amiability upon the Soul, which renders it acceptable to all that know what true Worth and Beauty is. He that in Righteousness, and Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghost, that is, in Christian Meekness and Quietness of Spirit, serveth Christ, is acceptable to God and approved of Men, Rom. 14.17, 18. and to whom else can we wish to recommend our selves?

Salomon (a very competent Judge of Beauty) hath determined, That it is a Man's Wisdom that makes his Face to shine, Eccl. 9. 10. and doubtless the Meekness of Wisdom contributes as much as any one Branch of it to this Lustre. We read in Scripture of three, whose Faces

shone

shone remarkably, and they were all three eminent for *Meekness*. The Face of *Moses* shone, *Exod. 34. 30.* and he was the meekest of all the Men on Earth. The Face of *Stephen* shone, *Acts 6. 15.* and he it was, who in the midst of a shower of Stones, so meekly submitted, and prayed for his Persecutors. The Face of our Lord *Jesus* shone in his *Transfiguration*, and he was the great Pattern of Meekness. It is a sweet and pleasing Air, which this Grace puts upon the Countenance, while it keeps the Soul in *tune*, and frees it from those jarring ill-favoured *Discords*, which are the certain effect of an ungovern'd Passion.

3. There is in it the *Credit of an Ornament*. The Text speaks of it, as an *Adorning*, much more excellent and valuable than *Gold*, or *Pearls*, or the most costly *Array*, much more recommending than all the Bravery of the *Daughters of Zion*. It is an adorning to the *Soul*, the principal, the immortal part of the Man. That *outward* adorning doth but deck, and beautifie the Body, which at the best, is but a *Sister to the Worms*, and will ere long be a *Feast* for them, but this is the Ornament of the *Soul*, by which we are ally'd to the *visible* World. 'Tis an adorning which recommends us to God, which is in his sight of *great price*, so the Text saith, and in that saith enough to its praise. *Ornaments* go by *Estimation*: now we may be sure, that the Judgment of God is right and unerring. Every thing is indeed as it is with God: Those are righteous indeed, that are *righteous before God*; and that is an Ornament indeed, which he calls and counts so. It is an Ornament of God's own making,

Luke 1. 6.

*making*; Is the Soul thus deck'd? 'Tis he that hath deck'd it: *By his Spirit he hath garnished the Heavens*, Job 26. 13. and by the same Spirit hath he *garnished* the meek and quiet Soul. It is an Ornament of his *accepting*, (it must needs be so, if it be of his own working) for to him that hath this Ornament, more adorning shall be given. He hath promised, *Psal. 149. 4.* that he will *beautifie the meek with Salvation*, and if the Garments of *Salvation* will not *beautifie*, what will? The Robes of Glory will be the everlasting Ornament of the meek and quiet Spirits. This Meekness is an Ornament which (like the *Israelites* Cloths in the Wilderneys) never waxeth old, nor will ever go out of fashion, while right Reason and Religion have any place in the World: All wise and good People will reckon those *best drest*, that put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and walk with him in the *white* of Meekness and Innocence. *Solomon* in all his Glory was not arrayed like one of these *Lillies of the Vallies*, tho' *Lillies among Thorns*.

The same Ornament, which in the Text is recommended to Wives, is by the same Apostle recommended to us all, *1 Pet. 5. 5.* *Yea all of you be subject one to another*, that explains what Meekness is; it is that mutual yielding which we owe one to another, for edification, and in the *fear of God*, (*Eph. 5. 21.*) This seems to be a hard Saying, how shall we digest it? an impracticable Duty, how shall we conquer it? why, it follows, *be clothed with Humility*. The word

*is in the margin, in the original, innodate, from*  
*Popis infix. ubi est, a Knot: Which notes, (1.) The fixed-*  
*an habete. nest of this Grace. We must gird it fast to*  
*Erasm.* us,

us, and not leave it to hang loose so as to be snatch'd away by every Temptation; Carelessness is no commendation of the Souls *adorning*, Watchfulness and Resolution in the strength of Christ must *tye the Knot* upon our Graces, and make them as the *Girdle* that cleaves to a Man's *Loins*. (2.) The *comeliness* and Ornament of it; Put it on as a *Knot of Ribbands*, as an Ornament to the Soul; such is the Meekness of Wisdom, it gives to the Head an *Ornament of Grace*, and (which is more) a *Crown of Glory*, Pro. 1.9. and 4.9.

4. There is in it the Credit of *true Courage*. *Meekness* is commonly despised and run down by the Grandees of the Age, as a piece of Cowardise and Mean-spiritedness, and the evidence of a *little Soul*, and is posted accordingly, while the most furious and angry Revenges are celebrated and applauded under the pompous Names of *Valor*, and *Honour*, and *Greatness of Spirit*, which ariseth from a mistaken Notion of *Courage*, the true Nature whereof, is thus stated by a very ingenuous Pen \*, That it is a *Resolution never to decline any evil of pain*, when the chusing of it, and the exposing of our selves to it, is the only Remedy against a greater evil; And therefore he that accepts a challenge, and so runs himself upon the evil of sin, which is the greater evil, only for fear of shame and reproach, which is the less evil, he is the *Coward*, while he that refuseth the challenge, and so exposeth himself to reproach, for fear of sin, he is the *valiant Man*. True Courage is such a *presence of Mind*, as enableth a Man rather to *suffer* than to *sin*, to chuse *Affliction* rather than *Iniquity*, to pass by an *Affront*, tho' he lose by

*Magni animi est proprium, placidum esse et injurias superne despicere. Sen.*

\* *Norris*,

*Miscell.*  
p. 167, 168;

*Paul*  
*shew'd*  
 more true  
 Valor when  
 he said, *I*  
*can do no-*  
*thing againſt*  
*the Truth,*  
 than *Goliath*  
 did when  
 he deſyed  
 all the *Hoſts*  
 of *Iſrael*.  
*Ward.*

it, and be hiſſ'd at for a Fool and a Sneak, rather than to engage in a ſinful Quarrel. He that can deny the *brutual Luſt* of Anger and Revenge, rather than violate the *Royal Law* of Love and Charity (however contrary the Sentiments of the World may be) he is truly Reſolute and Courageous. *The Lord is with thee, thou mighty Man of Valor.* Fretting and Vexing is the fruit of the Weakneſs of Women and Children, but much below the ſtrength of a *Man*, eſpecially of the *New Man*, that is born from above. When our Lord Jeſus is deſcribed in his *Majeſty*, riding *proſperouſly*, the Glory he appears in, is *Truth*, and *Meekneſs*, and *Righteouſneſs*, *Pſal. 45. 4.* The Courage of thoſe who overcome this *great red Dragon* of Wrath and Revenge, by meek and patient ſuffering, and by *not loving their Lives unto the Death*, *Rev. 12. 11.* will turn to the beſt and moſt honourable account on 'tother ſide the Grave, and will be crowned with Glory, and Honour, and Immortality, when thoſe that *cauſed their terror in the Land of the Living*, fall *ingloriouſly*, and bear *their ſhame with them that go down to the Pit*, *Ezek. 32. 24.*

5. The Credit of a *Conformity to the beſt Patterns*. The Reſemblance of thoſe that are confeſſedly Excellent and Glorious, hath in it an Excellency and Glory. To be meek, is to be like the *greateſt Saints*, the Elders that obtained a good Report, and were of Renown in their Generation. 'Tis to be like the *greateſt Angels*, whoſe Meekneſs in their Converſe with, and Miniſtration to the Saints, is very obſervable in the Scriptures; nay, it is to be like the *Great God himſelf*, whoſe Goodneſs is his Glory, (who

# A Discourse concerning Meekness.

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is *Deus Optimus*, and therefore *Maximus*) who is slow to Anger, and in whom *Fury is not*, Isa. 27. 4. We are then *followers of God*, as dear *Children*, when we walk in Love, and are kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, Eph. 5. 1, 2. compare chap. 4. 1. The more *quiet* and *sedate* we are, the more like we are to that God, who tho' he be nearly concerned in all the Affairs of this lower World; is yet far from being moved by its most violent Convulsions and Revolutions; But as he was from Eternity, so he is and will be to Eternity, *infinitely happy in the enjoyment of himself*. It is spoken to his Praise and Glory, Psal. 29. 10, *The Lord sits upon the Floods*, even then, when the Floods have lifted up their voice, have lifted up their Waves, Psal. 93. 3, 4. Such is the Rest of the *eternal Mind*, that he sits as firm and undisturbed upon the moveable Flood, as upon the immoveable Rock, the same Yesterday, to Day, and for Ever; And the meek and quiet Soul that preserves its Peace and Evenness against all the ruffling Insults of Passion and Provocation, doth thereby somewhat participate of a Divine Nature, 2 Pet. 1. 4.

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Let the true Honour that attends this Grace of Meekness, recommend it to us: It is one of those things that are *Honest*, and *Pure*, and *Lovely*, and of good Report; A Vertue that hath a Praise attending it, Phil. 4. 8. A Praise, perhaps not of the most of Men, but of God, Rom. 2. 29. It is the certain way to get and keep, if not a great Name, yet a good Name. Such as is better than precious Ointment. Though there be those that trample upon the meek of the Earth, and look upon them as *Micha* upon



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*A Discourse concerning Meekness.*

David despising them in their Hearts, yet if this is to be vile, let us be yet more vile, and base in our own sight, and we shall find (as David argues there) that there are those of whom we shall be had in honour, sooner or later, 2 Sam. 6.22. for the Word of Christ shall not fall to the Ground, that those who humble themselves shall be exalted.

[ 2. ] Consider how comfortable a meek and quiet Spirit is. Inward Comfort is a desirable good, which hath more in it of reality, and depends less upon Opinion, than that of Credit: And this is that which Meekness and Quietness of Spirit, hath such a direct tendency to, nay which it carries along with it. What is true Comfort and Pleasure, but a Quietness in our own Bosom? Those are most easie to themselves, that are so to all about them, while they that are a burthen and a Terror to others, will not be much otherwise to themselves. He that would lead a quiet, must lead a peaceable Life, 1 Tim. 2. 2. The surest way to find Rest to our Souls, is to learn of him who is meek and lowly in heart, Mat. 11.29. Let but our moderation be known unto all Men; And the Peace of God which passeth all understanding, will keep our Hearts and Minds, Phil. 4. 5, 7. Quietness is the thing which even the busie, noisie part of the World pretend to desire and pursue; They will be quiet, yea, that they will, or they'l know why, they will not endure the least disturbance of their Quietness. But verily they go a mad way to work, in pursuit of quietness, greatly to disquiet themselves inwardly, and put their Souls into a continual hurry, only to prevent or remedy some small outward Disquietment from others.

others. But he that is meek, finds a sweeter, safer Quietness, and much greater Comfort than that which they in vain pursue. *Great Peace have they that love this Law of Love, for nothing shall offend them, (Ezal. 119. 165.)* Whatever Offence is intended, it is not so interpreted, and by that means the Peace is preserved. If there be a Heaven any where upon Earth, it is in the meek and quiet Soul, that Acts, and Breaths above that lower Region, which is infested with Storms and Tempests, the Harmony of whose Faculties, is like the Musick of the Spheres they talk of, a perpetual Melody. *Mercy and Truth are met together, Righteousness and Peace have kissed each other.*

A meek and quiet Christian must needs live very comfortably, for he enjoys Himself, he enjoys his Friends, he enjoys his God, and he puts it out of the reach of his Enemies to disturb him in these Enjoyments.

1. He enjoys Himself. Meekness is very nearly ally'd to that Patience which our Lord Jesus prescribes to us, as necessary to the keeping of the Possession of our own Souls, *Luke 21. 19.* How Calm are the Thoughts, how Serene are the Affections, how Rational the Prospects, and how even and composed are all the Resolves of the Meek and Quiet Soul? How

free from the Pains and Tortures of the angry Man, who is disleiz'd and dispossessed of himself, and while he toils and vexes to make

other things his own, makes his own Soul not so: His Reason is in a mist, confounded and bewildred, cannot argue, infer, or foresee with

Opinion is the rate of Things,  
From which our Peace doth flow,  
I have a better fate than Kings,  
Because I think it so.

Mrs. Phillips

— Ne te  
quaesiverim  
extra.

any certainty. His Affections are upon the full-speed, hurry'd on with an *impetus*, which is as uneasie as it is hazzardous. Who is that good Man that is *satisfied from himself*? Pro. 14. 14. Who but the *quiet Man* that needs not go a-broad for satisfaction, but having Christ dwelling in his Heart by Faith, hath in him that *Peace*, which the World can neither give, nor take away: While those that are fretful and passionate, rise up early, and sit up late, and eat the Bread of Sorrow, in pursuit of revengeful Projects, the God of Peace *giveth to his belov'd* (*Jedidiah's*, one of Solomon's Names, who was a Man of Peace) *sleep*, Psal. 127. 2.) The sleep of the Meek is quiet, and sweet, and undisturbed: Those that by Innocency and Mildness, make themselves the Sheep of Christ, shall be made to lye down in the *green Pastures*, Psal. 23. 2. *That which would break an angry Man's Heart, will not break a meek Man's Sleep.* It is promised, Psal. 22. 26. *That the meek shall eat and be satisfied.* He hath what sweetness is to be had in his Common-Comforts, whilst the angry Man either cannot eat, his Stomach's too full, and too high, as *Abah*, 1 Kings 21. 4. or eats and is not satisfied, unless he can be revenged, as *Haman*, Esth. 5. 12, 13. *All this avails me nothing*, (tho' it was a Banquet of Wine with the King and Queen) as long as *Mordecai* is unhang'd.

It is spoken of as the Happiness of the Meek, that they *delight themselves in the abundance of Peace*, Psal. 37. 11. others may delight themselves in the abundance of *Wealth*, a poor delight that is interwoven with so much Trouble and Disquietment; but the meek, tho' they have but a little

little Wealth, have Peace, abundance of Peace, Peace like a River, and this such as they have a Heart to *delight themselves in, sat lucis intus*, as *Oecolumpadius* said, their Souls are a *Goshen* in the midst of the *Egypt* of this World, they have *Light in their Dwelling*, when *Clouds and Darknes* are round about them: This is the joy which a stranger doth not intermeddle with. We may certainly have (and we would do well to consider it) less inward disturbance, and more true ease and satisfaction in *forgiving* twenty injuries, than in *avenging* one. No doubt *Abigail* intended more than she express'd, when to qualify *David*, and to perswade him to pass by the Affront which *Nabal* had given him, she prudently suggested, that *hereafter this shall be no grief unto thee, nor offence of Heart.* — Not only so, but it would be very sweet, and easie, and comfortable in the reflection. Such a *re-joycing* is it, especially in a Suffering-day, to have the Testimony of Conscience that in *simplicity*, and *godly sincerity*, not with *fleshly Wisdom*, but *by the Grace of God*, particularly the Grace of Meekness, we have had our *Conversation in the World*, and so have pleased God, and done our Duty. He did not speak the Sense, no not of the *sober Heathen*, that said, *Est vindicta bonum, vitā jucundius ipsa*: Revenge is sweeter than Life, for it often proves more bitter than Death.

1 Sam. 25  
ver. 31.

2 Cor. 1. 12.

2. He enjoys his Friends: — And that's a thing in which lies much of the Comfort of humane Life. Man was intended to be a sociable Creature, and a Christian much more. But the angry Man is *unfit* to be so, that takes Fire at every Provocation, fitter to be abandon-

ed to the *Lions Dens*, and the *Mountains of the Leopards*, than to go forth by the *footsteps of the Flock*. He that hath his hand against every Man, cannot but have (with *Ishmael's Character, Ishmael's Fate*) every Man's hand against him, (*Gen. 16.12.*) and so he lives in a State of War; But Meekness is the *Cement* of Society, the *Bond* of Christian-Communion; it plaineth and polisheth the *Materials* of that *Beautiful Fabrick*; and makes them lye close and tight, and the living *Stones* which are built up a *Spiritual House*, to be like the *Stones* of the *Temple* that *Herod* built, all as one *Stone*, whereas, *Hard upon hard* (as the *Spaniards Proverb* is) *will never make a Wall*. Meekness preserves among *Brethren* that *Unity*, which is like the *Ointment* upon the *Holy Head*, and the *Dew* upon the *Holy Hill*, *Psal. 133. 1, 2.* In our present state of Imperfection there can be no *Friendship*, *Correspondence* or *Conversation* maintain'd without mutual *Allowances*; we do not yet dwell with *Angels* or *Spirits* of just Men *made perfect*, but with Men *subject to like Passions*. Now Meekness teaches us to consider this, and to allow accordingly, and so *Distances* and *Strangeness*, *Fewds* and *Quarrels* are happily prevented, and the *beginnings* of them crushed by a *timely care*. How necessary to true *Friendship* it is to *surrender* our *Passions*, and to *subject* them all to the *Laws* of it, was (perhaps) intimated by *Jonathans* delivering to *David* his *Sword* and his *Bow*, and his *Girdle*, all his *Military Habilliments*; when he entred into a *Covenant* of *Friendship* with him, *1 Sam. 18. 3, 4.*

3. He enjoys his *God*; and that's most comfortable of all. 'Tis the *Quintessence* of all  
Hap-



Happiness, and that without which all our other Enjoyments are *sapless*, and *insipid*: For this, none are better qualified than those that are arrayed with the *Ornament of a meek and quiet Spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.* 'Twas when the Psalmist had newly conquer'd an unruly Passion, and compos'd himself, that he lift up his Soul to God, in that pious and pathetic Breathing, *Whom have I in Heaven but thee, and there is none upon Earth, that I desire in comparison of thee?* Psal. 73. 25. We enjoy God when we have the Evidences and Assurances of his Favor, the Tasts and Tokens of his Love, when we experience in our selves the Communications of his Grace, and the continued instances of his Image stamped upon us: And this those that are most *meek and quiet* have usually the greatest degrees of. In our Wrath and Passion, we give place to the *Devil*, and so provoke God to withdraw from us: Nothing grieves the *Holy Spirit of God* (by whom we have Fellowship with the Father) more than *bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking*, Eph. 4. 30, 31. But to this Man doth the God of Heaven look with a peculiar Regard, *even to him that is poor, poor in Spirit*, (Isa. 66. 2.) *וְיָ 78*, — *to him that is quiet*, so the Syriack; *to him that is meek*, so the Caldee. The great God over-looks Heaven and Earth to give a favourable look to the Meek and Quiet Soul. Nay, he not only looks at such, but, *Isa. 57. 15. He dwells with them*, noting a constant Intercourse and Communion between God and humble Souls. His *Secret is with them*, he gives them more Grace, and they that thus dwell in Love, *dwell in God, and God in Them.* *The Waters were dark indeed, but they were quiet*

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quiet, when the Spirit of God moved upon them, and out of them produced a beautiful World.

This calm and sedate Frame, doth very much qualifie and dispose us for the Reception and Entertainment of Divine Visits, and sets bounds to the Mountain, (Exod. 19. 12.) on which God is to descend, that no Interruption may break in, and chargeth the Daughters of Jerusalem, by the Roes and the Hinds of the Field (those sweet, and gentle, and peaceable Creatures) not to stir up or awake our Love until he please, Cant. 2. 7. Some think it was for the quieting and composing of his Spirit (which seems to have been a little ruffled) that Elisha call'd for the Minstrel, 2 Kings 3. 15. and then the hand of the Lord came upon him. Never was God more intimate with any meer Man, than he was with Moses, the meekest of all the Men on the Earth, and it was requir'd as a needful Qualification of the High-Priest, who was to draw near to Minister, that he should have Compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way, Heb. 5. 1. 2. The meek will be guide in Judgment, with a still small Voice which cannot be heard, when the Passions are loud and tumultuous. The angry Man when he awakes, is still with the Devil, contriving some malicious Project, The meek and quiet Man, when he awakes is still with God, solacing himself in his favour. Return unto thy Rest, O my Soul, saith David, Psal. 116. 7. when v. 6. he had reckon'd himself among the simple, i. e. the mild, innocent, and inoffensive People. Return to thy Noah, so the word is, (for Noah had his Name from Rest) perhaps alluding to the Rest which the Dove found with Noah in the

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the Ark, when she could find none any where else. Those that are harmless, and galled, and simple as Doves, can with comfort return to God as to their Rest. It is excellently paraphras'd by Mr. Patrick, "God and thy Self (my Soul) enjoy, in quiet Rest, free'd from thy Fears." It is said, Psalm 147.6. That the Lord lifteth up the meek; As far as their Meekness Reigns, they are lifted up above the stormy Region, and fixt in a Sphere perpetually calm and serene. They are advanced indeed that are at home in God, and live a Life of Communion with him, not only in Solemn Ordinances, but even in the Common Accidents and Occurrences of the World. Every Day is a Sabbath-day, a Day of Holy Rest with the meek and quiet Soul, that is, *one of the Days of Heaven*. As this Grace gets ground, the Comforts of the Holy Ghost grow stronger and stronger, according to that precious Promise, Isa. 29. 19. *The Meek also shall increase their Joy in the Lord, and the Poor among Men, shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel.*

4. It is not in the Power of his Enemies to disturb and interrupt him in these Enjoyments. His Peace is not only sweet, but safe and secure: As far as he acts under the Law of Meekness, it is above the reach of the assaults of those that wish ill to it. He that abides quietly under the shadow of the Almighty, shall surely be delivered from the Snare of the Fowler, Psal. 91. 1, 3. The greatest Provocations that Men can give would not hurt us, if we did not, by our inordinate and foolish concern, come too near them, and within reach of their Canon; we may therefore thank our selves, if we be damaged; He that hath learned, with Meekness and Quietness,

*Nemo laedi-  
tur nisi a seipso. Dist.*

Idcirco quis se laedis ut doleas, quis fructus lae- dentis in do- lore laesi est, ergo, cum fructum ejus everteris non dolendo, ipse doleas necesse est amissione fructus sui Improbum cadis susti- nendo. Tertull. de patientia cap. 8.

ness, to forgive Injuries, and pass them by, hath found the best and surest way of baffling and de- feating them, nay, it is a kind of innocent Re- venge. It was an evidence that *Saul* was acted by another Spirit, in that when the Children of *Belial* despis'd him, and brought him no Pre- sents, hoping by that Contempt to give a shock to his Infant-Government, he held his peace, and so neither his Soul, nor his Crown received any disturbance, 1 Sam. 10. 27. *Shimei*, when he cur- sed *David*, intended thereby to pour Vinegar into his Wounds, and to add affliction to the afflicted: but *David*, by his Meekness, preserv'd his Peace, and *Shimei's* design was frustrated, So let him curse; (2 Sam. 16. 10.) Alas poor Crea- ture! he hurts himself more than *David*, who, while he keeps his Heart from being Tinder to those Sparks, is no more prejudiced by them, than the Moon is by the foolish Curr that barks at it. The meek Man's Prayer is that of *David*, Psal. 61. 2. Lead me to the Rock that is higher than I: And there I can (as Mr. Norris expresses it,) *smile to see,*

*The Shafts of Fortune all drop short of me.*

The meek Man is like a Ship that rides at Anchor, *movetur sed non amovetur*, the Storm moves it, (the meek Man is not a Stock or Stone under Provocation,) but doth not remove it from its Port. It is a Grace that in reference to the Temptations of Affront and Injury, as Faith in reference to Temptation in general, *quencheth* is the great fiery Darts of the Wicked; it is Armor of test Affront to all Injuries in the World, for it returns them upon the injurious, and makes them Useless, Ineffective and Innocent. Taylor, Great Exempl. p. 304.

Proof against the spiteful and envenom'd Arrows of Provocation, and is an impregnable Wall to secure the Peace of the Soul there, where *Thief cannot break thro' to steal*, while the angry Man lays all his Comforts at the Mercy of every Wasp that will strike at him.

So that, upon the whole Matter, it appears, That the Ornament of a meek and quiet Spirit, is as easie as it is comely.

[3.] Consider how profitable a meek and quiet Spirit is. All People are for what they can get; 'tis that which the busie World is set upon, *Every one for his Gain from his Quarter*, Isa. 56. 11. 'Tis for this that they break their Sleep, and spend their Spirits, and raise so great a Dust: Now it will be hard to convince such, that really there is more to be gotten by Meekness and Quietness of Spirit, than by all this Hurry and Adoe. They readily believe, that *in all Labour, there is Profit*; but let God himself tell them, *In Returning and rest shall ye be saved, in Quietness and in Confidence shall be your strength*, they will not take his Word for it, but they say, (as it follows there) *No, for we will flee upon Horses, and we will ride upon the Swift*, Isa. 30. 15, 16. He that came from Heaven to bless us, hath entail'd a special Blessing upon the Grace of Meekness, *Mat. 5. 5. Blessed are the Meek*; and his saying, they are blessed, makes them so, for those whom he blesteth, are blessed indeed; *blessed, and they shall be blessed*.

Meekness is gainful and profitable.

1. As it is the Condition of the Promise: The Meek are therefore blessed, *for they shall inherit the Earth*. 'Tis quoted from *Psal. 37. 11.* and is almost the only express Promise of temporal good

As Heaven good things in all the new Testament. Nor that is taken by the Meek shall be put off with the Earth only, Violence, then they would not be truly blessed, but they so is Earth shall have that as an Earnest of something more. by Meek-  
*petis. Trap.* Some read it, *They shall inherit the Land; i. e.*  
*in loc.* the Land of Canaan, which was not only a Type

*Præf. Cat.*  
*p. (mibi) 117*

and Figure, but to them that believed, a Token and Pledge of the Heavenly Inheritance. So that, "A double Canaan (as Dr. Hammond observes) is thought little enough for the meek Man. The same Felicity, in a manner, attending him, which we believe of Adam, if he had not fallen, a Life in Paradise, and from thence a Transplantation to Heaven. —

But besides this, Meekness is a branch of Godliness, which hath more than other Branches of it, the promise of the Life that now is, 1 Tim. 4.8. *They shall inherit the Earth;* the sweetest and surest Tenure is that by Inheritance, which is founded in Sonship: That which comes by Descent to the Heir, the Law attributes to the Act of God, who hath a special Hand in providing for the Meek. They are his Children, and if Children, then Heirs. It is not always the largest Proportion of this World's Goods, that falls to the meek Man's share, but whether he hath more less, he hath it by the best Title, not by a Common, but a Covenant-Right: He holds in Capite, in Christ our Head, an honourable Tenure.

*Terram inhabitant  
 quam sibi  
 divinitus*

*concessam esse norunt, & secure agunt sub Dei tutelâ, et hoc illis satis est donec mundi hereditatem ultimo die adeant. Feroces vero omnia possidendo nihil possident. Calv. in Mat. 5. 5.*

If he hath but a little, he hath it from God's Love, and with his Blessing, and behold all things  
 are



are clean and comfortable to him. The wise Man hath determined it, *Prov. 17. 1. Better is a dry Morfel and quietness therewith, than a Housefull of Sacrifices with strife:* And *chap. 15. 17. Better is a Dinner of Herbs where love is, than a stalled Ox and hatred therewith.* Be the Commons never so short, he that hath Rule over his own Spirit, knows how to make the best of them; how to *suck Honey out of the Rock, and Oil out of the flinty Rock, Deut. 32. 13. Blessed are the meek, for they shall weild the Earth;* so Old *Wickliffe's* Translation reads it, (as I remember 'tis quoted in *The Book of Martyrs*) and very significantly. Good Management contributes more to our comfort, than great Possessions. Whatever a meek Man hath of this Earth, he knows how to weild it, to make a right and good use of it, and that's all in all. Quiet Souls so far inherit the Earth, that they are sure to have as much of it as is good for them; as much as will serve to bear their Charges thro' this World to a better, and who would covet more? Enough is as good as a Feast. The Promise of God without present Possession, is better than Possession of the World, without an interest in the Promise.

2. As it hath in its own Nature a direct tendency to our present Benefit and Advantage. *He that is thus wise, is wise for himself,* even in this World, and effectually Consults his own Interest.

1. Meekness hath a good influence upon our Health. If envy be the *rottenness of the Bones,* *Pro. 14. 30.* Meekness is the Preservation of them. As the indulging of inordinate Appetites towards those things that are pleasing to the Flesh, so the indulging

indulging of inordinate Passions against those things that are displeasing, do in the effect prejudice and injure the very Body which they contend so much for. The Excesses and Exorbitances of Anger, stir up those peccant Humors in the Body, which kindle and increase wasting and killing Diseases, but Meekness governs these Humors, and so contributes very much to the good Temper and Constitution of the Body. When *Abab* was sick for *Naboth's Vineyard*, Meekness would soon have cured him. *Moses*, the meekest of Men, not only liv'd to be old, but was then free from the Infirmities of Age; *His Eye was not dim, nor his Natural Force abated*, Deut. 34. 7. which may be very much imputed to his Meekness, as a means. The days of old Age would not be such evil Days, if old People did not, by their own frowardness and unquietness, make them worse than otherwise they would be. Ungovern'd Anger enflames the Natural Heat, and so begets acute Diseases, dries up the Radical Moisture, and so hastens Chronical Decays. The Body is call'd, the *Sheath* or Scabbard of the Soul, Dan. 7. 15. *Marg.* How often doth an envious fretful Soul, like a Sharp Knife, cut its own Sheath; and, as they say of the Vipers Brood, eat its own way out: All which Meekness happily prevents.

The Quietness of the Spirit will help to cool distempering Heats, to suppress Melancholy Vapours; and this, as other of Wisdom's Precepts, will be *Health to the Navel, and Marrow to the Bones; Length of Days, and long Life; and Peace shall they add unto thee, but Wrath kills the foolish Man*, Job 5. 2.

2. It hath a good influence upon our *Wealth*, the preservation and increase of it. As in Kingdoms, so in Families and Neighbourhoods, *War begets Poverty*. Many a one hath brought a fair Estate to ruine, by giving way to the Efforts of an ungovern'd Anger, that barbarous Idol to which even the Children's Portions, and the Families Maintenance are oftentimes sacrificed. *Contention* will as soon cloath a Man with Rags as *Slothfulness*; that therefore which keeps *the Peace* doth not a little befriend *the plenty*. It was *Abraham's* meek Management of his Quarrel with *Lot*, that secured both his own and his Kinsman's Possessions, which otherwise would have been an easie Prey to the *Canaanite* and the *Perizzite* that dwelt then in the Land, *Gen. 13. 7, 8*. And *Isaac*, whom I have sometimes thought to be the most quiet and calm of all the Patriarchs, and that passed the days of his Pilgrimage most silently, raised the greatest Estate of any of them, *Gen. 26. 13*. *he grew till he became very great*: And his Son *Jacob* lost nothing at long run, by his meek and quiet Carriage towards his Uncle *Laban*. Revenge is costly; *Haman* bid largely for it, no less than *ten thousand Talents of Silver*, *Esth. 3. 9*. it's better to forgive, and save the Charges. Mr. *Dod* us'd to say, *Love is better than Law, for Love is cheap, but Law is chargeable*. Those Tradesmen are commonly observ'd to thrive most, that make the least noise, that with quietness Work, and mind their own Business, *2 Thes. 3. 12*.

3. It hath a good influence upon our *Safety*. In the day of the Lord's Anger, the meek of the Earth are most likely to be secured. *It may be you shall be hid*, so runs the Promise, *Zeph. 2. 3*.

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If any be, you shall, you stand fairest for special Protections. Meekness approacheth to that Innocence which is commonly an effectual security against Wrongs and Injuries. However, some base and servile Spirits may insult over the Tame and Humble: Yet with all Persons of Honour, it is confessedly a piece of Cowardise to set upon an unarm'd unresisting Man, that resents not Provocation, and is ready to yield to every demand. *Who is he that will harm you, if you be followers of him that is Good,* in his Goodness, 1 Pet. 3. 13. Who draws his Sword, or cocks his Pistol at the harmless silent Lamb, while every one is ready to do it, at the furious barking Dog? Thus doth the meek Man escape many of those perplexing Troubles, those Woes, and Sorrows, and Wounds without cause, which he that is Passionate, Provoking and Revengeful, pulls upon his own Head. *Wise Men turn away Wrath, but a Fool's Lips enter into Contention, and his Mouth calleth for Strikes.* It is an Honour to a Man to cease from strife, but every Fool will be meddling to his own hurt. An instance of this I remember Mr. Baxter gives in his Book of Obedient Patience, which was this, "That once going along London-streets a Hectoring rude Fellow jostled him; he went on his way and took no notice of it; but the same Man affronting the next he met in like manner, he drew his Sword and demanded Satisfaction, and Mischief was done. He that would sleep both in a whole Skin, and in a whole Conscience, must learn rather to forgive Injuries, than to revenge them. The two Goats that met upon the narrow Bridge (as it is in Luther's Fable) were both in danger, should they quarrel, but

but were both preserv'd by the Condescension of one that lay down and let the other go over him. It is the evil of Passion that it turns our Friends into Enemies, but it is the excellency of Meekness, that it turns our Enemies into Friends, which is an effectual way of conquering them. *Saul*, as inveterate an Enemy as could be, was more than once melted by *David's* Mildness and Meekness, *Is this thy voice, my Son David?* saith he, 1 Sam. 24. 16. *I have sinned, return my Son David*, 1 Sam. 26. 21. And after that, *Saul persecuted him no more*, Chap. 27. 4. The change that *Jacob's* Meekness made in *Esau* is no less observable, and (some think) is remark'd as very strange and surprizing, by an unusual Pointing in the Hebrew Text, upon *Esau's* kissing *Jacob*, Gen. 33. 4. *וַיִּשָּׁק* a prick over every Letter, to put the Reader in mind to take special notice of it. In the ordinary Dispensations of Providence, some tell us \*, they have found it remarkably true in times of Publick Trouble and Calamity, it hath commonly fared best with the meek and quiet; their Lot hath been safe and easie, especially if compared with the contrary Fate of the turbulent and seditious. Whoso is wise and observes these things will understand the loving kindness of the Lord to the quiet in the Land, against whom we read indeed of *Plots* laid, and deceitful matters devis'd, Psal. 35. 20. — 37. 12, 14. But those by a kind and over-ruling Providence ordinarily baffled and made succesless. Thus doth this Grace of Meekness carry its own Recompence along with it, and in keeping of this Commandment, as well as after keeping it, there is a great Reward, Psalm 19. 11.

\* *Dr Ham:  
mond, Pract.  
Cat. p. 117.*

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[4.] Consider what a Preparative it is for something further. It is a very desirable thing to *stand compleat in all the Will of God*, Col. 4. 12. to be fitted and furnished for every good Work, to be made ready, a people *prepared for the Lord*: A living Principle of Grace is the best Preparation for the whole Will of God. Grace is establishing to the Heart, it is the *Root of the Matter*, and a *good Foundation for the time to come*. This Grace of *Meekness* is particularly a good Preparation, for what lies before us in this World.

1. It makes us fit for any Duty. It puts the Soul in Frame, and keeps it so for all Religious Exercises. There was *no noise of Axes and Hammers* in the building of the Temple: Those are most fit for Temple-service that are most quiet and compos'd. The Work of God is best done, when it is done without noise. Meekness qualifies and disposes us to hear and receive the Word: When Malice and Envy are laid aside, and we are like new-born Babes, for Innocency and Inoffensiveness, then we are most fit to *receive the sincere Milk of the Word*, and are most likely to grow thereby, 1 Pet. 2. 1, 2. Meekness prepares the Soil of the Heart, for the Seed of the Word, as the Husbandman *opens and breaks the Clods of his Ground, and makes plain the face thereof*, and then *casts in the principal Wheat, and the appointed Barley*, Isa. 28. 24, 25. Christs Ministers are Fishers of Men, but we seldom fish successfully in these troubled Waters. The Voice *Eliphaz* heard was ushered in with a profound silence, Job 4. 16. and in *slumbrings upon the Bed*, a quiet Place and Posture. *God openeth the Ears of Men, and sealeth their Instructions,*



ons, Job 33. 15, 16. *Prayer* is another Duty which Meekness doth dispose us for the right and acceptable Performance of. We do not lift up pure Hands in Prayer, if they be not without Wrath, 1 Tim. 2. 8. Prayers made in Wrath are written in Gall, and can never be pleasing to, or prevailing with the God of Love and Peace. Our Rule is, *First go and be reconciled to thy Brother, and then come and offer thy Gift,* Mat. 5. 23, 24. And if we do not take this method, though we seek God in a due Ordinance we do not seek him in the due Order,

*Leave thy Gift: Οὐδε  
ὡς θύσαι  
αἰμαίναν  
ἵναί τοι  
δώσω κατα-*

*λιπαρομήνη, καὶ συννεμίσεις ὄβριον εἶναι, καὶ πρόσθε αἰτελήσιν καὶ καταλαγῆναι. Chrysoſt. Hom.*

The Lord's Day is a day of Rest, and none are fit for it, but those that are in a quiet Frame, whose Souls are entred into that present *Sabbatism*, which the Gospel hath provided for the People of God, Heb. 4. 9. The Lord's Supper is a Gospel-Feast of *Unleavened Bread*, which must be kept not with the old Leaven of Wrath, and Malice, and Wickedness, but with the Unleavened Bread of Sincerity and Truth.

*Quid est ad  
pacem Dei  
accedere  
sine pace? ad  
remissionem  
debitorum*

*cum retentione? quomodo placabit patrem iratum in fratrem, cum omnis ira ab initio interdicta sic nobis? Tertul. de Orat. c. 10.*

God made a gracious visit to *Abraham*, Gen. 13. 14. After that Lot was separated from him, viz. After the Strife betwixt him and Lot was over, in which he had discovered so much Mildness and Humility. The more carefully we preserve the Communion of Saints, the fitter we are for Communion with God. It is observable, that the *Sacrifices* which God appointed under the Law, were not ravenous Beasts, and Birds of

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Prey, but Calves, and Kids, and Lambs, and Turtle Doves, and young Pigeons, all of them Emblems of Meekness, and Gentleness, and Inoffensiveness, for *with such Sacrifices God is well pleased.* This quietness of Spirit contributes very much to the constant steddiness and regularity of a religious Conversation. Hot and eager Spirits that are ready to take Fire at every thing, are usually very inconstant in their Profession, and of great Inconsistency with themselves, like a Man in an Ague Fit, sometimes burning hot, and sometimes shivering for cold; or like those that Gallop in the beginning of their Journey, and tire before the end of it; whereas the meek and quiet Christian is still the same, and by keeping to a constant rate rides Ground. If you would have one Foot of the Compasses go even round the Circumference, you must be sure to keep the other fixt and quiet in the Centre, for *your strength is to sit still.*

2. It makes us *fit for any Relation*, which God in his Providence may call us into. Those that are quiet themselves, cannot but be easie to all that are about them, and the nearer any are to us in Relation and Converse, the more desirable it is that we should be easie to them. Relations are various, as Superiors, Inferiors and Equals; he that is of a meek and quiet Spirit, is cut out for any of them. *Moses* was forty Years a Courtier in *Egypt*, forty Years a Servant in *Midian*, and forty Years a King in *Jeshurun*, and his Meekness qualified him for each of these Posts, and still he held fast his Integrity. There are various Duties requisite, according as the Relation is, and various Graces to be exercised, but this of Meekness is the Golden Thread that must run thro'

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all. If Man be a sociable Creature, the more he hath of Humanity, the more fit he is for Society. Meekness would greatly help to preserve the Wisdom and due Authority of Superiors, the Obedience and due Subjection of Inferiors, and the Love and mutual Kindness and Serviceableness of Equals. A calm and quiet Spirit receives the comfort of the Relation most thankfully, studies the Duty of the Relation most carefully, and bears the Inconvenience of the Relation (for there is no unmixed Comfort under the Sun) most chearfully and easily. I have heard of a Married Couple, who, tho' they were both naturally of a hot and hasty Temper, yet lived very comfortably in that Relation by observing an Agreement made between themselves, *Never to be both angry together*; an excellent Law of Meekness it is, which if faithfully liv'd up to, would prevent many of those Breaches among Relations, which occasion so much Guilt and Grief, and are seldom heal'd without a Scar. Twas part of the good Advice given by a Pious and Ingenious Father, to his Children newly entred into the Conjugal Relation,

*Doth one speak Fire? 't'other with Water come;  
Is one provok'd? be 't'other soft or dumb.*

And thus one wise, both happy. But where Wrath and Anger are indulged, all Relations are embittered, those that should be helps meet, become as Thorns in our Eyes, and Goats in our sides. Two indeed are better than one, and yet it is better to dwell alone in the Wilderness, than with a Contentious and Angry Relation, who is like a continual dropping in a very rainy day, Pro.

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21. 19. — 27. 15. Some of the Hebrew Criticks have noted, that if you take away *ל* the fear of the Lord, from *איש ואשה* Husband and Wife; there remains nothing but *אש* and *אש* Fire, Fire. — It is so in other Relations.

3. It makes us *fit for any Condition*, according as the wise God shall please to dispose of us. Those that through Grace are enabled to compose and quiet themselves, are fit to live in this World, where we meet with so much every day to discompose and disquiet us. In general, whether the outward Condition be *prosperous* or *adverse*, whether the World smile or frown upon us, a meek and quiet Spirit is neither lifted up with the one, nor cast down with the other, but still in the same poise: In Prosperity humble and condescending, the Estate rising, but the Mind not rising with it; in Adversity encourag'd and cheer'd up, cast down, but not in despair; in both even, like a Dye, throw it which way you will it lights on a square side. St. Paul that had learn'd in every Estate to be content, *εὐχαρίστων*, satisfied within himself, *knew how to be abased, and knew how to abound, every where, and in all things he was instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need*, Phil. 4.

11, 12. Changes without, made none within. It is a Temper which, as far as it hath the Ascendant in the Soul, makes every Burthen fit light, by bringing the Mind to the Condition, when the Condition is not in every thing brought to the Mind. Prosperity and Adversity have each of them their particular Temptation to Peevishness and Frowardness, the former by making Men *imperious*, the latter by making Men *impatient*; against the Assaults of each of

of these Temptations, the Grace of Meekness will stand upon the Guard. Being to pass thro' this World by Honour and Dishonour, by evil Report, and good Report; that is, thro' a great variety of Conditions and Treatments, we have need of that long-suffering and kindness, and love unfeigned, which will be armour of Righteousness, on the right-hand and on the left. I refer you to that Scripture, 2 Cor. 6. 6, 7, 8. Meekness and quietness will fortifie the Soul on each hand, and suit it to the several Entertainments which the World gives us, like a skilful Pilot, that which Point of the Compass soever the Wind blows from, will shift his Sails accordingly, and knows either how to get forward, and weather his Point with it, or however to lye by without damage. It is the continual easiness of a quiet Temper to make the best of that which is.

μη ζήλῃ τὰ  
 γινώσκοντα  
 γινώσκαι  
 ὡς θελοῦς  
 ἀλλὰ θέλας  
 γινώσκαι τὰ γινώσκοντα ὡς γινώσκαι καὶ ἐν παῖσι. Epist. c. 13.

4. It makes us fit for a Day of Persecution. If Tribulation and Affliction arise because of the word (which is no foreign Supposition) the meek and quiet Spirit is arm'd for it so as to preserve its Peace and Purity at such a time, which are our two great Concernments, that we may neither torment our selves with a base fear, nor pollute our selves with a base compliance. We use to say, *We will give any thing for a quiet Life.* I say, any thing but a quiet Conscience, which will be best secur'd under the Shield of a meek and quiet Spirit, which doth not render railing for railing, 1 Pet. 3. 9. nor aggravate the threatened Trouble, or represent it to it self in its

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its most formidable Colours, but has learn'd to put a *but* upon the power of the ~~new~~ enraged Enemies; *they can but kill the Body*, and to witness the most righteous Testimony with Meekness and Fear, 1 Pet. 3. 15. like our Master, who *when he suffered, threatened not, but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously*, 1 Pet. 2. 23. Suffering Saints, (as the Suffering Jesus) are compar'd to Sheep, Isa. 53. 7. Rom. 8. 36.) as Sheep dumb before the *Shearer*, nay, dumb before the *Butcher*. The meek and quiet Christian, if duly call'd to it, can tamely part, not only with the *Wool*, but with the *Blood*; not only with the *Estate*, but with the *Life*, and even then rejoyce with joy unspeakable and full of Glory. Angry froward People in a day of Rebuke, are apt to pull Crosses upon themselves by needless Provocations, or to murmur, and complain, and fly in the face of Instruments, and give unbecoming Language, contrary to the Laws of our Holy Religion, and the Example of our Master, and so do more hurt than good by their suffering. Whenever we have the honour to be *persecuted for righteousness-sake*, our great care must be to glorifie God, and to adorn our Profession (which is done most *effectually* by Meekness and Mildness under the hardest Censures, and the most cruel Usage.) So manifesting that we are indeed under the power and influence of that *Holy Religion*, which we think it worth our while to suffer for.

5. It makes us fit for *Death and Eternity*. The Grave is a quiet place, *there the wicked cease from troubling*, Job 3. 17. Those that were most troublesome are there bound to the Peace, and their *Hatred and Envy* (those great make-bates)



*are there perished, Eccles. 9. 6.* Whether we will or no, in the Grave we shall *lie still and be quiet*, Job 3. 13. What a great Change then must it needs be to unquiet, angry and litigious People, and what a mighty *shock* will that sudden forced *Rest* give them after such a violent rapid *Motion*! It is therefore our Wisdom to compose our selves for the Grave, to prepare our selves for it, by Adapting and Accommodating our selves to that which is likely to be our *long Home*, this is *dying daily*; quieting our selves, for Death will shortly quiet us.

The meek and quiet Soul is at Death let into that *Rest*, which it hath been so much labouring after, and how ~~now~~ welcome must that needs be. Thoughts of Death and the Grave are very agreeable to those who love to be quiet, for then and there, they shall *enter into Peace*, and *rest in their Beds*, Isa. 57. 2.

After Death we expect the Judgment, than which, nothing is more dreadful to them that are *Contentious*, Rom. 2. 8. The coming of the Master brings terror along with it, to those that smite *their Fellow-Servants*, Luke 12. 45, 46. but those that are meek and quiet are likely to have their Plea ready, their Accounts stated, and whenever it comes, it will be no surprize to them: To those whose *Moderation is known to all Men*, it will be no ungrateful News, to hear that *the Lord is at hand*, Phil. 4. 5. It is therefore prescrib'd as that which ought to be our constant care, that whenever our Master comes, we may be found of him in *Peace*, 2 Pet. 3. 14. *i. e.* in a peaceable Temper. *Blessed is that Servant, whom his Lord when he comes shall find in such a frame.* "A good Man (saith the late excellent A. B. Til-  
lotson,

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" Iotson, in his Preface to his Book of Family Re-  
 " ligious) would be loth to be taken out of the World  
 " reeking hot from a sharp Contention with a  
 " perverse Adversary; and not a little out of  
 " Countenance to find himself in this Temper  
 " translated into the calm and peaceable Regions  
 " of the Blessed, where nothing but perfect Cha-  
 " rity and Good-will reigns for ever. Heaven  
 for certain is a quiet Place, and none are fit for  
 it but quiet People. The Heavenly Canaan, that  
 Land of Peace, would be no Heaven to those  
 that delight in War; turbulent and unquiet  
 People would be out of their Element, like a  
 Fish upon Dry Ground, in those Calm Regi-  
 ons.

They are the Sheep of Christ, such as are  
 patient and inoffensive, that are called to in-  
 herit the Kingdom; without are Dogs that bite  
 and devour, Rev. 22. 15.

They are the Wings of a Dove, not those  
 of a Hawk or Eagle that David would fly upon  
 to his desired Rest, Psal. 55. 6.

Now lay all this together, and then consider,  
 Whether there be not a real excellency in this  
 Meekness and Quietness of Spirit, which doth  
 highly recommend it to all that Love either God,  
 or themselves, or have any sensible Regard to  
 their own Comfort, either in this World, or in  
 that to come.

CHAP. III. *The Application.*

**A**ND now, *First*, Have we not reason to lament the want of the Ornament of a *meek and quiet Spirit*, among those that profess Religion, and especially in our own Bosoms? If this be Christianity, the Lord help us! How little is there of the Thing, even among those that make great Pretensions to the Name? Surely, (as one said in another Case) *Aut hoc non Evangelium, aut hi non Evangelici*: Either this is not Gospel, or these are not Gospel-Professors. And, O how bare and uncomely doth Profession appear, for want of this adorning! When the *Israelities* had stript themselves of their Ornaments to furnish up a Golden Calf, it is said, they were *made naked to their shame*, *Exod. 32.25*. How naked are we (like *Adam* when he had sinn'd) for want of this Ornament, 'tis well if it were to the shame of true Repentance, for there's reason enough for it.

I am not teaching you to Judge and Censure others in this matter, there is but too much of that to be found among us; we are quick-fighted enough to spy faults in others, the transports of whose Passions, we should interpret favourably. But we have all cause more or less to condemn our selves, and confess Guilt in this Matter. In many things we all offend, and perhaps in this, as much as in any, coming short of the Law of Meekness and Quietness.

We are called Christians, and it is our Priviledge and Honour that we are so: We name the Name of the meek and lowly Jesus, but how

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how few are acted by his Spirit, or conform'd to his Example? It is a shame that any occasion should be given to charge it upon Professors, who in other things are most strict and sober, that in this they are most faulty; And that many who pretend to Conscience and Devotion should indulge themselves in a peevish, froward and morose Temper and Conversation, to the great reproach of that worthy Name by which we are called. May we not say, as that Mahometan did when a Christian Prince had perfidiously broke his League with him, *O Jesus, are these thy Christians?*

It is the manifest Design of our Holy and Excellent Religion to smooth, and soften, and sweeten our Tempers, and to work off the ruggedness and unevenness of them; is it not a wretched thing therefore, that any who profess it, should be sowr'd, and embitter'd, and less conversable and fit for humane Society, than other People? He was look'd upon as a very good Man in his Day, and not without Cause, who yet had such an unhappy temper, and was sometimes so transported with Passion, that his Friend would say of him, *He had Grace enough for ten Men, and yet not enough for himself.* All the Disciples of Jesus Christ, even those of the first three, do not know what manner of Spirit they are of, Luke 9. 35. So apt are we to deceive our selves, especially when these Exorbitances shrowd themselves under the specious and plausible pretence of Zeal for God and Religion. But yet the Fault is not to be laid upon the Profession, or the strictness and singularity of that in other things that are praise-worthy; nor may we think the worse of Christianity for any such

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such Blemishes : We know very well, that *the Wisdom that is from above is peaceable, and gentle, and easie to be entreated, and all that's sweet, and aimable, and endearing, tho' she is not herein justified of all that call themselves her Children.*

But the blame must be laid upon the Corruption and Folly of the Professors themselves, who are not so perfectly deliver'd into the Mold of Christianity as they should, but neglect their Ornament, and prostitute their Honour, and suffer the Authority of their Graces to be trampled upon, they let fire go out of the Rod of their Branches, which devour their Fruits ; so that there is no Meekness as a strong Rod, to be a Scepter to rule in the Soul, which is a lamentation, and shall be for a lamentation, ( I refer you to that complaint, *Ezek. 19. 14.* ) something resembling the woful Degeneracy of the Angels that sinn'd, of whom it is said, *Jude 6.* That they kept not *τινὴν ἀντίστασιν ἀρχῶν*, *Subm Principatum.* So the Vulgar : Might it not be read, *The Government of themselves*, they lost the Command they should have had over their inferior Faculties, and suffered them to get head. And is it not much like this, when those pretend to the Dignity, who have lost the Dominion of a Religious Profession, having no rule over their own Spirits.

*Cudworth.  
intellect.  
Syst. p. 816.*

And yet, blessed be God ! even in this corrupt and degenerate World, there are many who appear in the excellent Ornament of a meek and quiet Spirit ; and some whose natural Temper is Hasty and Cholerick, as 'tis said *Calvin's* was, yet have been enabled by the Power of Divine Grace to shew in a good Conversation, their Works with Meekness and Wisdom. It is not so impracticable

impracticable, as some imagine it, to subdue these Passions, and to preserve the Peace of the Soul, even in a stormy day.

But that we may each of us judge our selves, and find matter for Repentance herein, I shall only mention those instances of irregular Deportment towards our particular Relations, which evidence the want of *Meekness and Quietness of Spirit*.

1. *Superiors are commonly very apt to chide*, and that's for want of Meekness. It's spoken to the praise of him, who is the Great Ruler of this perverse and rebellious World, that *he will not always chide*, Psa. 103.9: But how many Little Rulers are there of Families and petty Societies, that herein are very unlike him, for they are always chiding? Upon every little Default they are put into a flame, and transported beyond due Bounds: Easily provok'd, either for no cause at all, or for very small cause; greatly provok'd, and very outrageous, and unreasonable when they are provok'd. Their Carriage fiery and hasty; their Language scurrilous and undecent; they care not what they say, nor what they do, nor who they fall foul upon, such *Sons of Belial*, that a Man cannot speak to them, 1 Sam. 25.17. one had as good meet a Bear robb'd of her Whelps, as meet Them. Here wants Meekness. *Husbands should not be bitter against their Wives*, Col. 3.19. *Parents should not provoke their Children*, Eph. 6.4. *Masters must forbear threatening*, Eph. 6.9. These are the Rules, but how few are rul'd by them? The undue and intemperate Passion of Superiors, goes under the umbrage and excuse of necessary strictness, and the maintaining of Authority, and the Education and Controul of Children and Servants: But surely every little faileur needs

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not be animadverted upon, but rather should be passed by; or if the fault must needs be reprov'd and corrected, may it not be done without such a Heat? What need so much noise and clamor, and all this ado? Is this the product of a meek and quiet Spirit? Is this the best Badge of your Authority you have to put on? And are these the Ensigns of your Honour? Is there no other way of making your Inferiors know their place, but by putting them among the Dogs of your Flock, and threatening them as such? Not that I am against Government and good Order in Families, and such *Reproofs* as are necessary to the support and preservation of that, and those so sharpen'd, as some Tempers require and call for. But while you are governing others, pray learn to govern your selves, and do not disorder your own Souls under pretence of keeping Order in your Families: For tho' you your selves may not be aware of it, yet it is certain, that by those Indications of your displeasure, which transgress the Laws of Meekness, you do but render your selves Contemptible, and Ridiculous, and rather *prostitute* than *preserve* your Authority. Tho' your Children dare not tell you so, yet perhaps they cannot but think that you are so very unfit to command them, who are so very unable to command your selves. Time was when you were your selves Children, and Scholars, and perhaps Servants and Apprentices, and so (if you will but allow your selves the liberty of Reflection) you cannot but know the Heart of an Inferior, (*Exod. 23. 9.*) and should therefore treat those that are now under you, as you your selves then wish'd to be treated. A due expression of Displeasure, so much as is necessary

*Memorare  
potest nisi  
qui de regl.  
Seneca.*

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necessary to the amendment of what is amiss, will very well consist with Meekness and Quietness. And your Gravity and Awful Composedness therein will contribute very much to the preserving of your Authority, and will command respect abundantly more than your Noise and Chiding. Masters of Families (and Masters of Schools too) have need, in this matter, to behave themselves wisely, *Psal. 101. 2.* To as to avoid the two Extreams, that of *Elk* foolish Indulgence on the one hand, *1 Sam. 2. 23. 24.* and that of *Saul's* brutish Rage, on the other Hand, *1 Sam. 20. 30. 33.* and for the hitting of this Golden Mean, *Wisdom is profitable to direct.*

2. Inferiours are commonly very apt to complain. If every thing be not just to their Mind, they are fretting, and vexing, and their Hearts are not within them; they are uneasie in their Place and Station, finding fault with every thing that is said or done to them. Here wants a quiet Spirit, which would reconcile us to the Post we are in, and to all the difficulties of it, and would make the best of the present state, tho' it be attended with many Inconveniencies. Those Unquiet People, whom the Apostle *Jude* in his Epistle compares to *raging Waves of the Sea, and wandering Stars*, *ver. 13.* were *Murmurers and Complainers*, *ver. 16.* *un-quiet*, *Blamers of their Lot.* — So the Word signifies. 'Tis an instance of Unquietness to be ever and anon quarrelling with our Allotment. Those Wives wanted a meek and quiet Spirit, that *cover'd the Altar of the Lord with Tears*, *Mal. 2. 13.* Not Tears of Repentance for Sin, but Tears of Vexation, at the Disappointments they met with in their outward

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outward Condition. *Hannah's* Meekness and Quietness was in some degree wanting, when she fretted, and wept, and would not eat, *1 Sam. 1: 7.* but Prayer compos'd her Spirit, and set her to rights, *v. 18.* *Her Countenance was no more sad.* It was the unquietness of the Spirit of the Elder Brother, in the Parable, that quarrel'd so unreasonably with the Father for receiving and entertaining the Penitent Prodigal, *Luke 15. 19.* For those that are given to be uneasy, will never want something or other to complain of. It is true (tho' not so readily apprehended) that the fullness, and murmuring, and silent frets of Children and Servants is as great a Transgression of the Law of Meekness, as the more open, noisie and avowed Passions of their Parents and Masters. We find the King's Chamberlains *wroth with the King,* *Ezra. 2. 21.* and *Cain's* quarrel with God himself, for accepting of *Abel,* was interpreted Anger at God, *Gen. 4. 6.* *Why art thou wroth, and why is thy Countenance fallen?* The Sour Looks of Inferiors, are as certain an indication of Anger resting in the Bosom, as the Big Looks of Superiors; and how many such instances of Discontent there have been, especially under a continual Cross, our own Consciences may perhaps tell us. It is the want of Meekness only, that makes those whom Divine Providence hath put under the Yoke, Children of *Belial,* that is, impatient of the Yoke.

3. Equals are commonly very apt to *clash* and contend. It is for want of Meekness that there are in the Church so many Pulpit and Paper-Quarrels, such strifes of Words, and perverse Disputings. That there are in the State such

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Factions and Parties, and between them such Animosities and Heart-Burnings; That there are in Neighbourhoods such Strifes, and Brawls, and Vexatious Law-suits, or such Distances, and Estrangements, and Shines one of another: That there are in Families Envies, and Quarrels among the Children and Servants, Crossing, and Thwarting, and finding Fault one with another: And that Brethren that dwell together, do not as they should *dwell together in Unity*. It is for want of Meekness that we are so impatient of Contradiction in our Opinions, Desires and Designs, that we must have our own Saying, right or wrong, and every thing our own way: That we are so impatient of Competitors, not enduring that any should stand in our Light, or share in that Work or Honour, which we would engross to our selves: That we are so impatient of Contempt, so quick in our Apprehension and Resentment of the least Slight or Affront, and so pregnant in our Fancy of Injuries, where really there are none, or none intended. They are not only Loud and profess'd Contentions, that evidence a want of Meekness, but also those silent Alienations in Affection and Conversation, which make a less noise; little Piques and Prejudices conceived, which Men are themselves so ashamed of, that they will not own them; these shew the Spirit disturb'd, and wanting the Ornament of *Meekness*. In a word; The wilful doing any thing to disquiet others, Slandering, Backbiting, Whispering, Tale-bearing, or the like, is too plain an Evidence, that we are not our selves rightly disposed to be quiet.

And now, may we not all remember our Faults this Day? and instead of condemning others,

tho' never so Faulty, should we not each of us bewail it before the Lord, that we have been so little acted by this excellent Spirit, and repent of all that which we have at any time said or done, contrary to the Law of Meekness, and from under the Direction and Influence of it? Instead of going about to extenuate and excuse our sinful Passions, let us rather aggravate them, and lay load upon our selves for them; *So foolish have I been and ignorant, and so like a Beast,* as the Psalmist speaks, when he is recovering himself from an intemperate heat, *Psal. 73. 22.* Think how often we have appear'd before God and the World, without our Ornament, without our Livery, to our shame. God kept account of the particular Instances of the unquietness of Israel: *They have tempted me (saith he) now these ten times, Numb. 14. 22.* Conscience is God's Register that Records all our Miscarriages: Even what we say and do in our haste, is not so quick as to escape its Observation: Let us therefore be often opening that Book now, for our Conviction and Humiliation, or else it will be opened shortly to our Confusion and Condemnation. *But if we would judge our selves, we should not be judged of the Lord.* May we not all say, as Joseph's Brethren did, (and perhaps some are, as they were, in a special manner call'd to say it, by humbling Providences) *We are verily guilty concerning our Brother, Gen. 42. 21.* Such a Time, in such a Company, upon such an Occasion, I wanted Meekness, and was unquiet; my Spirit was provok'd, and I spake unadvisedly with my Lips, and now I remember it against my self. Nay, have not I lived a Life of Unquietness, in the Family, in the Neighbourhood,

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hood, always in the Fire of Contention, as in my Element, and breathing Threatnings? And by so doing, have not I dishonour'd my God, discredited my Profession, disturbed my own Soul, grieved the blessed Spirit, and been to many, an occasion of Sin? And for all this, ought not I to be greatly humbled and ashamed? Before we can put on the Ornament of a Meek and Quiet Spirit, we must first wash in the Laver of true Repentance, not only for our Gross and Open Extravagancies of Passion, but for all our Neglects and Omissions of the Duties of Meekness.

*Secondly*, Have we not Reason to labour and endeavour, since there is such a Vertue, there is such a Praise, to attain these things? Should we not lay out our selves to the utmost, for this Ornament of a Meek and Quiet Spirit? For your Direction in this Endeavour, (if you be indeed willing to be directed) I shall briefly lay before you,

1. *Some Scripture Precepts of Meekness.*
2. *Some Patterns of it.*
3. *Some particular Instances, in which we have special need of it.*
4. *Some good Principles that we should abide by.* And,
5. *Some good Practices that we should abound in, in order to our growth in this Grace of Meekness.*

And in opening these Things, we will endeavour to keep close to the Law and to the Testimony.



SECT. I.

*Some Scripture Precepts of Meekness.*

If we lay the Word of God before us for our Rule, and will be rul'd by it, we shall find the command of God making Meekness and Quietness to be as much our Duty, as it is our Ornament. We are there told it as the Will of God,

1. That we must *seek Meekness*. This Command we have, *Zeph. 2. 3.* and (which is especially observable) it is directed to the Meek of the Earth: *Seek ye the Lord, all ye meek of the Earth: — Seek Meekness.* Tho' they were Meek, and were pronounced so by him that searcheth the heart, yet they must seek *Meekness*, which teacheth us, That those who have much of this Grace, have still need of more, and must desire and endeavour after more; *Si dixisti, sufficit, peristi.* He that sits down content with the Grace he hath, and is not pressing forwards towards Perfection, and striving to grow in Grace, to get the Habits of it more strengthened and confirm'd, and the Actings of it more quickned and invigorated, it is to be fear'd hath no true Grace at all; but tho' he sit never so high, and never so easie in his own opinion, yet *sits down*, short of Heaven. Where there's *Life*, one way or other there will be *Growth*, till we come to the perfect Man. *Job 17. 9. He that hath clean hands will be stronger and stronger.* Paul was a Man of great attainments in Grace, and yet we find him forgetting the things that are *behind* and reaching forth to those that are *before*, *Phi. 3. 13, 14.* Those who took joyfully the spoiling of their

*Puto multos potuisse ad sapientiam pervenire, nisi statim se commoverent. Sen. de tranqu.*

Goods, are yet told that they had *need of Patience*, Heb. 10. 34, 36. Thus the meek of the Earth (who being on the Earth, are in a state of Infirmary and Imperfection, of Trial and Temptation) have still need of Meekness, that is, they must learn to be yet more calm and compos'd, more stiddy, and even, and regular in the Government of their Passions, and in the managery of their whole Conversation. They who have silenc'd all angry Words, must learn to suppress the very first Risings and Motions of angry Thoughts.

It is observable, When the meek of the Earth, are especially concern'd to seek Meekness, even then when the Decree is ready to bring forth, v. 2. when the *day of the Lord's Anger hastens on*, when the Times are bad, and desolating Judgments are breaking in, then we have occasion for all the Meekness we have, and all we can get, and all little enough. Meekness towards God, the Author, and towards Men, the Instruments of our Trouble: Meekness to bear the Trial, and to bear our Testimony in the Trial. There is sometimes an *Hour of Temptation*, Rev. 3. 10. a *Critical Day*, when the exercise of Meekness is the Work of the Day; Sometimes the Children of Men are more than ordinary provoking, and then the Children of God have more than ordinary need of Meekness. When God is justly angry, and Men are unjustly angry, when our Mothers Children are angry with us, and our Father angry too, there's anger enough stirring, and then, *Blessed are the Meek*, that are careful to keep possession of their Souls, when they can keep possession of nothing else; whose Hearts are fix'd, and quiet in shaking and unquiet Times. Now the way prescribed for the attainment of Meekness,

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Meekness is to seek it. Ask it of God, pray for it, 'tis a fruit of the Spirit, 'tis given by the God of all Grace, and to him we must go for it. It is a Branch of that Wisdom, which he that *lacketh must ask of God, and it shall be given him, Jam. 1. 5.* The God we address to is call'd, *The God of Patience and Consolation, Rom. 15. 5.* and he is therefore the God of Consolation, because the God of Patience (for the more patient we are, the more we are comforted under our Afflictions) and as such we must eye him, when we come to him for Grace to make us *like-minded*, that is, meek and loving one towards another, which is the Errand the Apostle there comes upon, to the Throne of Grace. God's People are, and should be a *Generation of Seekers, that covet the best Gifts, and make their Court to the best Giver*; who never said to the wrestling Seed of Jacob, *Seek in vain*, but hath given us an assurance firm enough for us to build upon, and rich enough for us to encourage our selves with, *Seek and ye shall find.* What would we more? *Seek Meekness, and ye shall find it.*

The Promise annexed is very encouraging to the *meek of the Earth*, that seek Meekness, *It may be you shall be hid in the day of the Lord's Anger.* Tho' it be but a Promise with an [*it may be,*] yet it ministers abundance of Comfort: God's *Probabilities*, are better than the Worlds *Certainties*: And the meek ones of the Earth, that hope in his Mercy, and can venture their All upon an intimation of his Good-will, shall find to their comfort, that when God brings a Flood upon the World of the Ungodly, he hath an Ark for all his *Noahs*, his resting quiet People, in which they shall be hid, it may be from the *Calamity* it self,

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1. However from the sting and malignity of it, (as Luther said) either in Heaven or under Heaven, either in the Possession, or under the Protection of Heaven. See *Psal.* 91. 1, 2.

2. We must put on Meekness. This precept we have, *Col.* 3. 12. Put on therefore (as the Elect of God, Holy and Beloved) — Meekness. It is one of the Members of the new Man, which, according to the Obligations we lye under from our Baptism, we must put on. Put it on as *Armour*, to keep Provocations from the Heart, and so to defend the Vitals. They that have try'd it will say, it is *Armour of Proof*; when you are putting on the whole Armour of God, do not forget this. Put it on as *Attire*, as your necessary Cloathing, which you cannot go without; look upon your selves as Ungirt, Undrest, Unblest without it. Put it on as a *Livery-Garment*, by which you may be known to be the Disciples of the Meek, and Humble, and Patient Jesus, and to belong to that Peaceable Family. Put it on as an *Ornament*, as a Robe, and a Diadem, by which you may be both beautified and dignified in the Eyes of others. Put it on as the *Elect of God, Holy and Beloved*, because you are so in Profession; and that you may approve your selves so in Truth and Reality, be cloath'd with Meekness. As the *Elect of God*, a choice People, a chosen People, whom God hath set apart for himself, from the rest of the World, as *holy*, sanctified to God, sanctified by him, study these Graces, which put such a Lustre upon Holiness, and recommend it to those that are without. As *beloved*, beloved of God, beloved of Man, beloved of your Ministers; for Loves sake put on Meekness. What winning perswasive Rhetorick is here? enough

*Aliter indu-  
untur mili-  
tes, aliter  
sacerdotes,  
ergo induite  
vobis conve-  
nientia ve-  
simenta.  
Aquin. in loc.*

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enough (one would think) to smoothe the roughest Soul, and to soften and sweeten the most obstinate Heart! Meekness is a Grace of the Spirits working, a Garment of his preparing, but we must put it on, *i. e.* must lay our Souls under the commanding Power and Influence of it. *Put it on*, not as a loose outer Garment, to be put off in hot Weather, but let it cleave to us, as the Girdle cleaves to a Man's Loyns; so put it on, as to reckon our selves naked, to our shame, without it.

3. We must follow after Meekness. — This Precept we have, 1 Tim. 6. 11. Meekness is there put in opposition to those *foolish and burlied Lusts*, which Timothy must flee from. Thou, O Man of God, flee these things, and follow after Righteousness, Godliness, Faith, Love, Patience, Meekness: See what good Company it is rank'd with. Every Christian is in a sense a *Man of God*, (tho' Timothy is call'd so as a Minister) and those that belong to God are concern'd to be and do so, as to recommend themselves to him, and his Religion to the World, therefore let the Men of God follow after Meekness. The Occasions and Provocations of Anger often set our Meekness at a distance from us, and we have it to seek then when we have most need of it. But we must follow after it, and not be taken off from the pursuit, by any Diversion whatsoever. While others are Ingenious and Industrious enough in following after Malice and Revenge, projecting and prosecuting angry Designs, be you as wise and diligent to preserve the Peace, both within doors and without. — Following Meekness, bespeaks a sincere Desire, and a serious Endeavour to get the Mastery of our Passion, and to

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check and govern, and moderate all the Motions of it. Tho' we cannot fully attain this Mastery, yet we must follow after it and aim at it. Follow *Meekness*, that is, as much as in you lies live peaceably with all Men, endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit; we can but make one side of the Bargain, if others will quarrel, yet let us be peaceable; if others will strike the Fire, that's their fault, let not us be as Tinder to it.

4. We must *shew all Meekness unto all Men*. This is one of the Subjects which Paul directs a young Minister to preach upon, *Tir. 3. 2. Put them in mind to shew all Meekness*. — It is that which we have need to be often minded of. *Meekness* is there opposed to Brawling and Clamour, which is the Fruit and Product of our own Anger, and the Cause and Provocation of the Anger of others. Observe, it is *all Meekness*, that is here recommended to us *wisdom requires* — all kinds of *Meekness*, *bearing Meekness*, and *forbearing Meekness*, *qualifying Meekness*, *condescending Meekness*, *forgiving Meekness*; the *Meekness* that endears our Friends, and that which reconciles our Enemies; the *Meekness* of Authority over Inferiors; the *Meekness* of Obedience to Superiors; and the *Meekness* of Wisdom towards all. All *Meekness* is *Meekness* in all Relations, in reference to all Injuries, all sorts of Provocation, *Meekness* in all the Branches and Instances of it: In this piece of our Obedience, we must be Universal. Observe further, we must not only have *Meekness*, *all Meekness*, but we must *shew* it, by drawing out this Grace into Exercise, as there is occasion: In our Words, in our Looks, in our Actions, in every thing that falls under the Observation



vation of Men, we must manifest that we have indeed a regard to the Law of Meekness, and that we make Conscience what we say and do, when we are provok'd. We must not only have the Law of Love written in our Hearts, but in our Tongues too, we must have the Law of Kindness, *Pro. 3. 1. 26.* And thus the Tree is known by its Fruits. The Light must shine, that others may see the good Works of it, and hear the good Words of it too, not to glorify us, but to glorify our Father, *Mat. 15. 16.* we should study to appear in all our Converse, so mild, and gentle, and peaceable, that all that see us may witness for us, that we are of the Meek of the Earth. We must not only be moderate, but let our *Moderation be known*, *Phil. 4. 5.* He that is in this respect a wise Man, let him shew it in the Meekness of Wisdom, *Jam. 3. 13.* What are good Cloaths worth, if they be not worn? Why hath the Servant a fine Livery given him, but to shew it for the honour of his Master, and of the Family he belongs to? How can we say we are meek, if we do not shew it? The shewing of our Meekness will beautify our Profession, and will adorn the Doctrine of God our Saviour, and may have a very good influence upon others, who cannot but be in Love with such an excellent Grace, when thus, like the *Ointment of the right Hand, it betrayeth it self*, and the House is filled with the Odor of it. Again, This Meekness must be thus shew'd unto all Men, Foes as well as Friends, those without, as those within, all that we have any thing to do with. We must shew our Meekness not only to those above us, that we stand in awe of, but to those below us, that we have an Authority over. *The Poor indeed*

indeed *use it Intreaties*, but whatever is the Practice it is not the Priviledge of the rich to answer roughly, Prov. 18. 23. We must *shew our Meekness not only to the Good and Gentle, but also to the Froward*, for this is thank-worthy, 1 Pet. 2. 18, 19. Our Meekness must be as extensive as our Love, so exceeding broad is this Commandment, *All Meekness to all Men*. We must shew this Meekness most, to those with whom we do most converse. There are some, that when they are in Company with Strangers, appear very mild and good humored, their Behaviour is plausible enough, and complaisant, but in their Families they are peevish, and froward, and ill-natured, and those about them scarce know how to speak to them; This shews that the fear of Man gives greater check to their Passions, than the fear of God. Our Rule is to be meek towards all, even to the Brute Creatures, over whom we are Lords, but must not be Tyrants; *A good Man is merciful to his Beast.*

*Habet ubi  
se etiam in  
privato lare  
explicet  
magnus Ani-  
mus. Sen.*

Observe the Reason which the Apostle there gives, why we should *shew all Meekness towards all Men*, for *we our selves also were sometime foolish*, verse 3. Time was when perhaps we were as bad as the worst of those we are now angry with, and if now it be better with us, we are purely beholden to the free Grace of God in Christ, that made the difference: And shall we be harsh to our Brethren, who have found God so kind to us? Hath God forgiven us that great Debt, and pass'd by so many wilful Provocations, and shall we be extreme to mark what is done amiss against us, and make the worst of every slip and oversight? The great Gospel Argument for mutual forbearance and forgiveness is,

*Hac et no-  
rissimus ali-  
quando, Fi-  
at, et si  
ant, non nas-  
cuntur Chri-  
stiani.  
Tertul.*

is, that God for Christ's sake hath forgiven us,  
Col. 3. 13.

It may be of use also for the qualifying of our Anger at our Inferiours, to remember not only our former sinfulness against God in our Unconverted State, but our former Infirmities in the Age and State of Inferiours; were not we our selves *sometimes foolish*? Our Children are careless, and playful, and froward, and scarce governable, and were not we our selves so when we were of their Age? And if we have now *put away childish Things*, yet they have not.— *Children may be brought up in the Nurture and Admonition of the Lord, without being provoked to wrath.*

5. We must study to be quiet, 1 Thes. 4. 11. that is, study not to disturb others, nor to be your selves disturbed by others; those are quiet that are not apt either to give or take offence, *ἀναισχρολογηταί*, be ambitious of this, as the greatest Honour, to be *quiet*: So the word signifies. The most of Men are ambitious of the Honour of great Business, and Power, and Preferment; they Covet it, they Court it, they compass Sea and Land to obtain it; but the ambition of a Christian should be carried out towards *Quietness*, we should reckon that the happiest Post, and desire it accordingly, which lies most out of the Road of Provocation. I cannot avoid mentioning, for the Illustration of this, that most excellent Poem of my Lord *Hale*, (the Sense of which is borrowed from a Hea-then.)

*Let him that will ascend the tottering Seat  
Of Courtly Grandeur, and become as Great,  
As are his mounting Wishes, as for me  
Let sweet Repose and Rest my Portion be.*

*——— Let my Age,  
Slide gently by, not overthwart the Stage  
Of Publick Action, unheard, unseen,  
And unconcern'd as if I ne're had been.*

This is studying to be quiet. Subdue and keep under all those disorderly Passions, which tend to the muddying and clouding of the Soul. Compose your selves to this holy Rest, put your selves in a posture to invite this blessed Sleep, which God gives to his beloved. Take pains as Students in Arts and Sciences do, to understand the Mystery of this Grace. I call it a *Mystery*, because St. Paul, who was so well versed in the deep things of God, speaks of this as a *Mystery*, *Phil. 4. 12.* *I am instructed as in a Mystery, both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need,* that is, in one word, *to be quiet* : ——— To study the Art of Quietness, is to take pains with our selves, to work upon our own Hearts, the Principles, Rules and Laws of Meekness ; and to furnish our selves with such Considerations as tend to the quieting of the Spirit, in the midst of the greatest Provocations. Others are studying to disquiet us, the more need we have to study how to quiet our selves, by a careful watching against all that which is rattling and discomposing. Christians should above all Studies, *study to be quiet*, and labour to be acted by an even Spirit, under all the unevennesses of Providence, and remember that

that one good Word, which Sir William Temple tells us the then Prince of *Orange* (now K. *William*) said he learnt from the Master of his Ship, who in a Storm was calling to the Steersman with this Word, *Steddy, Steddy*, Let but the hand be steddy, and the heart quiet, and then, though our Passage be rough, we may make a Shift to weather the Point, and get safe to the Harbour.

SECT. II.

*Some Scripture Patterns of Meekness and Quietness of Spirit.*

Good Examples help very much to illustrate and enforce good Rules, bringing them closer to particular Cases, and shewing them to be practicable. Precedents are of great use in the Law. If we would be found walking in the *same Spirit*, and walking in *the same Steps*, with those that are gone before us to Glory, this is the *Spirit* we must be acted by, and these are the *Steps* we must walk in: This is the Way of good Men for wise Men to walk in. Let us go forth then by the Footsteps of the Flock, and set our selves to follow them, who through Faith and Patience inherit the Promises. We are compassed about with a great Cloud of Witnesses, that will bear their Testimony to the Comfort of Meekness, and upon trial recommend it to us; but we shall single out only some few out of the Scripture.

1. *Abraham* was a Pattern of Meekness, and he was the Father of the Faithful. The Apostle here in the verse but one before the Text, proposeth *Sarah* for an Example to Women, particularly an

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Example

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Example of Meekness in an inferior Relation; *she obeyed Abraham*, and (in token of the respect due to a Husband) *she called him Lord*. Now *Abraham* is a Pattern of the same Grace in a Superior. He that was famous for Faith, was famous for Meekness; for the more we have of Faith towards God, the more we shall have of Meekness towards all Men. — How meek was *Abraham*, when there happened a strife betwixt his Herdsmen and *Lot's*, which, had it proceeded, might have been of ill Consequence, for the *Canaanite* and the *Perizzite* dwelled then in the Land, but it was seasonably taken up by the Prudence of *Abraham*, Gen. 13. 8. *Let there be no strife, I pray thee: Tho' he might command the Peace, yet for Love's sake he rather beseecheth.* Every word hath an air of Meekness, and a tendency to keep the Peace. And when the Expedient, pitch'd upon for the prevention of Strife, was their parting from each other, tho' *Lot* was the *Junior*, yet *Abraham*, for Peace-sake quitted his right, and gave *Lot* the choice, ver. 9. and the gracious visit which God gave him thereupon, v. 14. was an abundant recompence for his mildness and condescension. Another instance of *Abraham's* Meekness, we have in his Carriage towards *Sarah*, when she quarrel'd with him so unreasonably about her Maid, angry at that which she her self had the doing of, Gen. 16. 5, 6. *My wrong be upon thee; — The Lord judge between me and thee.* *Abraham* might soon have replied, You may e'ne thank your self, it was your own Contrivance; but laying aside the present Provocation, he abides by one of the Original Rules of the Relation, *Behold thy Maid is in thy Hand*. He did



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not answer Passion with Passion, that would have put all into a flame presently ; but he answered Passion with Meekness, and so all was quiet. Another instance of *Abraham's* Meekness, we have in the Transactions between Him and *Abimelech* his Neighbour, *Gen. 21. 24, 25.* He first enters into a Covenant of Friendship with him, which was confirm'd by an Oath, and then (not reproacheth him, but) reproveth him for a wrong that his Servants had done him about a Well of Water, which gives us this Rule of Meekness, *Not to break Friendship for a small matter of difference* : Such and such occasions there are, which they that are disposed to it, might quarrel about, but *what is that between me and thee ?* If Meekness Rule, matters in Variance may be fairly reasoned and adjusted without Violation or Infringement of Friendship. This is the Example of that great Patriarch. The future Happiness of the Saints is represented as the Bosom of *Abraham*, *Luke 16. 23.* a quiet State. Those that hope to lye in the Bosom of *Abraham* shortly, must tread in the steps of *Abraham* now, whose Children we are, *as long as we thus do well, and who (as Maimonides expresseth it) is the Father of all that are gathered under the Wings of the Divine Majesty.*

2. *Moses* was a Pattern of Meekness, it was his Master-Grace, that in which, more than in any other, he excell'd. This Testimony the Holy Ghost gives of him, *Numb. 12. 3. That the Man Moses was very meek, above all the Men which were upon the face of the Earth.*

*Josephus*  
Antiq. l. 4.  
c. 8. gives  
this cha-  
racter of  
*Moses*, Af-  
fectus ita

*semper in potestate habuit, ut omnino illis carere videretur, et nomina tantum eorum ex his quæ in aliis hominibus conspiceret, cogita habere.*

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This Character of him comes in there in a Parenthesis, (probably inserted by the same inspired Pen, that wrote the last Chapter of *Deuteronomy*) upon occasion of an Affront he receiv'd from those of *his own House*; which intimates, that his quiet and patient bearing of that, was, of all other, the greatest Proof and Instance of his Meekness. Those can bear any Provocation, that can bear it from their near Relations. The Meekness of *Moses*, as the Patience of *Job*, was try'd on all hands. *Armour of Proof* shall be sure to be shot at. It should seem that his Wife was none of the best humour'd Women; for what a Passion was she in, about the circumcising of her Son; when she reproach'd him as a *bloody Husband*; and we do not read of one word that he reply'd, but let her have her saying, *Exod. 4. 25, 26.* When God was angry, and *Zipporah* angry, it was best for him to be quiet. The Lot of his Publick Work, was cast in the Provocation, in the day of Temptation in the Wilderness, *Psa. 95. 8.* But, as if all the Mutinies of Murthering *Israel*, were too little to try the Meekness of *Moses*, his own Brother and Sister (and those of no less a Figure than *Miriam* the Prophetess, and *Aaron* the Saint of the Lord) pick a quarrel with him, speak against him, envy his Honour, reproach his Marriage, and are ready to head a Rebellion against him, *Num. 12. 1, 2.* God heard this, *v. 2.* and was angry, *v. 9.* But *Moses*, tho' he had reason enough to resent it heinously, was not at all moved by it, took no notice of it, made no complaint to God, no answer to them, and was so little interested in the matter, that we don't find one word he said, till we find him, *v. 13.* praying so heartily for his provoking Sister, who

was

was then under the Tokens of God's Displeasure for the affront she gave him. The less a Man strives for himself, the more is God engaged in Honour and Faithfulness to appear for him. When Christ said, *I seek not mine own Glory*, he presently added, *but there is one that seeketh and judgeth.* And it was upon this occasion that *Moses* obtain'd this good Report, That *he was the meekest of all the Men on the Earth.* —

“ No Man could have given greater proofs of  
 “ Courage, than *Moses* (~~with~~ the Learned Bi-<sup>it is</sup>  
 “ shop *Halk* Remark. *Contemp.* l. 6.) He slew the  
 “ *Egyptain*, beat the *Midianite* Shepherds, con-  
 “ fronted *Pharaoh* in his own Court, not fearing  
 “ the Wrath of the King, he durst look God in  
 “ the Face amidst all the Terrors of Mount *Sinai*,  
 “ and draw near to the thick Darkness where God  
 “ was, and yet that Spirit which made and  
 “ knew his Heart, saith, He was the Meekest,  
 “ Mildest Man upon the Earth. Mildness and  
 “ Fortitude may well lodge together in the same  
 “ Breast, which corrects the Mistake of those  
 “ that will allow none Valiant but the Fierce.

The Meekness of *Moses* qualified him to be a Magistrate, especially to be King in *Jeshurun*, among a People so very provoking, that they gave him occasion to use all the Meekness he had, and all little enough to bear their Manners in the Wilderness. When they murmured against him, quarrel'd with him, arraigned his Authority, and were sometimes ready to stone him, he resented these Provocations with very little of personal Application or Concern, but instead of using his Interest in Heaven, to summon Plagues upon them, he made it his Business to stand in the Gap, and by his Intercession for them, to

turn away the Wrath of God from them, and this not once nor twice, but *many times*.

And yet we must observe, that tho' *Moses* was the meekest Man in the World, yet when God's Honour & Glory were concern'd, none more warm and zealous; witness his resentment of the golden Calf, when in a Holy Indignation at that abominable Iniquity, he deliberately broke the Tables. And when *Korah* and his Crew invaded the Priests Office, *Moses*, in a pious Wrath, said unto the Lord, *Respect not thou their Offering*, Numb. 16. 15. He that was a Lamb in his own Cause, was a Lion in the Cause of God; Anger at Sin, as Sin, is very well consistent with Reigning Meekness. Nor can it be forgotten, that tho' *Moses* was so eminent for Meekness, yet he once transgress'd the Laws of it; when he was old, and his Spirit was provok'd, he *spake unadvisedly with his Lips, and it went ill with him for it*, Psal. 106. 32, 33. which is written, not for Imitation, but for Admonition, not to justify our rash Anger, but to engage us to stand upon our Guard at all times against it, that he who *thinks he stands may take heed lest he fall*, and that he who hath thus fallen may not wonder if he come under the Rebukes of Divine Providence for it in this World, as *Moses* did, and yet may not despair of being pardoned upon Repentance.

3. *David* was a Pattern of Meekness, and it is promised, *Zach. 12. 8. That the Feeble shall be as David*. In this, as in other instances, he was a Man after God's own Heart. When his own Brother was so rough upon him without Reason, 1 Sam. 17. 28. *Why camest thou down hither*, &c? how mild was his Answer? *What have I now done? Is there not a Cause?* ver. 29. When his

his Enemies reproached him, he was not at all disturbed at it, *Psal. 38. 13. I, as a deaf Man, heard not.* When *Saul* persecuted him with such an unwearied Malice, he did not take the advantage which Providence seem'd to offer him, more than once, to revenge and right himself, but left it to God to do it for him. *David's* meek Spirit concurr'd with the Proverb of the Antients, *Wickedness proceedeth from the Wicked; but my Hand shall not be upon him,* 1 Sam. 24. 13. When *Nabal's* Churlishness provok'd him, yet *Abigail's* Prudence soon pacified him, and it pleas'd him to be pacified. When *Shimei* cur-

sed him, with a bitter Curse, in the day of his Calamity, he represent'd not the Offence, nor would hear any talk of punishing the Offender: *So let him curse; let him alone, for the*

*Lord hath bidden him,* 2 Sam. 16. 10, 12. quietly committing his Cause to God, who judgeth righteously, *verse 12.* And other instances there are in his Story, which evidence the Truth of what he said, *Psal. 131. 2. My Soul is even like a weaned Child.*

And yet *David*, a great Soldier, a Man of celebrated Courage, that slew a Lion, and a Bear, and a Philistine, as much a ra-

venous Beast as either of them, which shews that it was his Wisdom and Grace, and not his Cowardise, that at other times made him so quiet. *David* was a Man that met with very many disquieting and disturbing Events in the several Scenes of his Life, through which (tho' sometimes they ruffled him a little, yet) for the

*Non ergo movebatur conviciis David, cui abundabat bonorum operum conscientia itaq; is qui cisd injuria movetur facit se dignum contumelia videri.*

*Ambr. De Offic. Lib. 1. Cap. 6.*

*David fuit fortis in praelio, mansuetus in imperio, patiens in convicio, ferre magis promptus quam referre injurias.*

*Ambr. l. 2. c. 17.*

main he preserv'd an admirable Temper, and an evenness and compos'dness of Mind, which was very exemplary. When upon the surprize of a fright, *he changed his Behaviour before Abimelech, and counterfeited that madness*, which angry People realize; yet his Mind was so very quiet and undisturbed, that at that time he penn'd the 34th Psalm, in which not only the excellency of the Matter, and the calmness of the Expression, but the composure of it *Alphabetically* (in the Hebrew) speaks him to be even then in a sedate frame, and to have very much the command of his own Thoughts. As at another time, when his own Followers spake of stoning him, tho' he could not still the Tumult of his Troops, he could 'tho' of his Spirits, for then he *encouraged himself in the Lord his God*, 1 Sam. 30. 6. As to those Prayers against his Enemies, which we find in some of his Psalms, and which sometimes sound a little harsh, surely they did not proceed from any such irregular Passion, as did in the least *clash* even with the Evangelical Laws of *Meekness*: We cannot imagine, that one who was so piously calm in his common Conversation, should be sinfully hot in his Devotion; Nor are they to be look'd upon as the private Expressions of his own angry Resentments, but as inspired Predictions of God's Judgments upon the Publick and Obstinate Enemies of Christ and his Kingdom, as appears by comparing Ps. 69. 22, 23. with Ro. 11. 9, 10. and Ps. 109. 8. with Act. 1. 20. Nor are they any more opposite to the Spirit of the Gospel, than the cries of the Souls under the Altar, Rev. 6. 10. or the Triumphs of Heaven and Earth in the destruction of *Babylon*, Rev. 19. 1, 2.



4. Saint Paul was a Pattern of Meekness. Tho' his natural Temper seems to have been warm and eager, which made him eminently Active and Zealous, yet that Temper was so rectified and sanctified, that he was no less eminently meek. He became all things to all Men, 1 Cor. 9. 19, &c. He studied to please all with whom he had to do, and to render himself easie to them, *for their good to Edification.* How patiently did he bear the greatest Injuries and Indignities, not only from Jews and Heathen, but from false Brethren, that were so very industrious to abuse and undermine him? How glad was he that Christ was preached, tho' out of Envy, and Ill-will by those that studied to *add Affliction to his Bonds?* In governing the Church, he was not led by the sudden Resolves of Passion, but always deliberated calmly concerning the use of the Rod of Discipline, when there was occasion for it, 1 Cor. 4. 21. *Shall I come to you with a Rod, or in the Spirit of Meekness?* That is, shall I proceed immediately to Censures, or shall I not rather continue the same gentle Usage I have hitherto treated you with, waiting still for your Reformation? wherein the Spirit of Meekness appears more open and legible, than in the use of the Rod, tho' that also is very well consistent with it.

Many other Patterns of Meekness might be instanc'd in, but the time would fail me to tell of Isaac, and Jacob, and Joseph, and Joshua, of Samuel also, and Job, and Jeremiah, and all the Prophets and Apostles, Martyrs and Confessors, and eminent Saints; who, by Meekness, subdued (not Kingdoms, but) their own Spirits; stopped the Mouths (not of Lions, but) of more fierce and formidable Enemies; quenched the violence (not of Fire, but) of

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of intemperate and more ungovernable Passions; and so wrought Righteousness, obtained Promises, escaped the edge of the Sword, and out of weakness were made strong; and by all this obtained a good Report, Heb. 11. 32, 33, 34. — But after all,

5. Our Lord Jesus was the great Pattern of Meekness and Quietness of Spirit. All the rest had their Spots, the fairest Marbles had their Flaws, but here is a Copy without a blot. We must follow the rest no further than they were conformable to this great Original: *Be followers of me* (saith Paul, 1 Cor. 11. 1.) *as I am of Christ*. He fulfilled all Righteousness, and was a compleat Exemplar of all that's Holy, Just and Good, but I think in most, if not all, those places of Scripture where he is particularly and expressly propounded to us for an example, 'tis to recommend to us some or other of the *Homiletical Graces* of Christianity, those I mean which tend to the sweetning of our Converse one with another: And therefore the Word was made *Flesh, and dwelt among us*, that he might teach us how to dwell together in Unity. We must *walk in love*, as Christ loved us, Eph. 5. 2. *Forgive*, as Christ forgave us, Col. 3. 13. *Please one another*, for Christ pleased not himself, Rom. 15. 2, 3. *Be Charitable to the poor*, for we know the Grace of our Lord Jesus, 2 Cor. 8. 9. *Wash one anothers feet*, i. e. stoop to the meanest Offices of Love, for Christ did so, John 13. 14. Mat. 20. 27, 28. *Doing all with lowliness of Mind*, for it is the same Mind that was in Christ Jesus, Phil. 2. 3, 5. and many other the like: But above all our Lord Jesus was an Example of Meekness. *Moses* had this Grace *as a Servant*, but *Christ as a Son*, he was anointed with it above measure. He is therefore

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therefore call'd the *Lamb of God*, for his Meekness, and Patience, and Inoffensiveness, and even in his Exaltation, he retains the same Character. One of the Elders told *John*, (Rev. 5. 5.) *That the Lion of the Tribe of Judah would open the Sealed Book, And I beheld (saith John, v. 6.) and lo a Lamb.* He that was a *Lion* for Strength and Courage, was a *Lamb* for Mildness and Gentleness: And if a *Lion*, yet the *Lion of the Tribe of Judah*, which the dying Patriarch describes to be a *Lion gone up from the Prey*, and that is *stooped down*, and *couched*, not to be roused up, Gen. 49. 9. which speaks the Quietness and Repose even of this *Lion*. If Christ be a *Lion*, he is a *Lion resting*, the Devil is a *Lion roaring*, (1 Pet. 5. 8.) But the Adorations given to Christ by the Heavenly Hosts speak of him as the *Lamb*, Rev. 5. 8, 12, 13. *Blessing and Glory — to him that sits upon the Throne*; they do not say, and to the *Lion of the Tribe of Judah*, but to the *Lamb*; tho' he hath a Name given him above every Name, yet he will be known by that Name, which speaks his Meekness, as if this were to be his Name for ever, and this his Memorial to all Generations: As he that rides upon the Heavens, by his Name *Jah*, is the Father of the Fatherless, and the Judge of the Widows, Psa. 68. 4, 5. Some make his Name *Xp̄stos* to have an allusion to *x̄nede*, which signifies Kind, and Gentle, and Gracious. Christ rides prosperously, because of Meekness, Psa. 45. 4.

The Hea-  
then by  
mistake,  
call'd Christ  
*Chrestus*,  
Gracious,

and the Christians *Chrestiani*: So Sueton. vit. Claud. c. 25. *Impulsore Chresto*. Lullanum takes notice of this, Instit. l. 4. c. 7. So doth Tertullian, Apol. c. 3. and thence calls the Christian Name *Nomen Innocuum*.

Now 'tis the character of all the Saints, that they follow the *Lamb*, Rev. 14. 4. as a *Lamb*, they follow

low him in his Meekness, and are therefore so oft called the Sheep of Christ. This is that part of his Copy which he expressly calls us to write after, *Mat. 11. 29. Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in Heart.* If the Master be mild, it ill becomes the Servant to be froward. The Apostle is speaking of Christ's Meekness under his Sufferings, when he saith, *That he left us an example, that we should follow his Steps,* 1 Pet. 3. 21.

Let us observe particularly the Meekness of our Lord Jesus, both towards his Father, and towards his Friends, and towards his Foes, in each of which he is an Example to us.

1. He was very meek toward God, his Father, cheerfully submitting to his whole Will, and standing compleat in it. In his Commanding-will, *Lo I come,* (saith he) *I delight to do thy Will,* tho' it enjoyn'd him a very hard piece of Service, yet it was his *Meat and Drink,* Joh. 4. 34. and he always did those things that pleased his Father, Joh. 8. 29. So likewise in his Disposing-will, he acquiesced from first to last. When he was entering upon that sharp encounter, tho' Sense startled at it, and said *Father if it be possible let the Cup pass from me,* yet he soon submitted with a great deal of Meekness, *Not as I will, but as thou wilt,* Mat. 26. 39, 42. Tho' it was a very bitter Cup, yet his Father put it into his Hand, and therefore he drank it without any struggle or reluctance, when it came to the setting to, reasoning himself from that Topic into this Compliance, *John 18. 11. The Cup that my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?* And it comes in there as a reason, why he would not have a Sword drawn in his defence.

2. He was very meek towards his Friends that lov'd and follow'd him. With what remarkable Instances

Instances of Mildness, and Gentleness, and Tenderness did he train up his Disciples; tho' from first to last, he was a *Man of Sorrows*, and acquainted with Grief, and where the Nature is corrupt, such are apt to be peevish and froward with those about them, yet how meek and calm his carriage was towards them all along, we may see,

(1.) In his bearing with their *Weaknesses and Infirmities*. After they had been long under the Inspection and Influence of such a Teacher, and had all the Advantages that Men could have for getting acquaintance with the things of God, yet how weak and defective were they in Knowledge and Gifts, and Graces? How ignorant and forgetful were they? How slow of Heart to understand and believe? And what Blunders did they make? Dull Scholars it should seem they were, and very bad Proficients. But their Hearts being upright with him, he did not cast them off, nor turn them out of his School, but made the best of them, rectified their Mistakes, instructed them in their Duty, and the Doctrine they were to preach, by Precept upon Precept, and Line upon Line, and taught them as they were able to bear it, as one that considered their Frame, and could have Compassion on the *Ignorant*, and on them that are *out of the way*, Heb. 5. 2. As long as he was with them, so long he suffered them, Mark 9. 19. This, as it is a great Encouragement to Christian Learners, so it is a great Example to Christian Teachers.

(2.) In his forgiving and passing by their Unkindnesses and Disrespects to himself. He was not extream to mark, nor what they did amiss of this kind. When they murmured at the cost that

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that was bestowed upon him, and call'd it wast, and had indignation at it, he did not resent it as he might have done, nor seem to observe how much what they said, reflected upon him, nor did he condemn them any other way, than by commending the Woman, *Mat. 26. 8, 11.* When *Peter*, and *James*, and *John*, the first three of his Disciples, were with him in the Garden, and very unseasonably slept, while he was in his Agony praying, so little concern'd did they seem to be for him, and such a grievous slight did they put upon him, yet observe how meekly he spoke to them, did not give them any hard Language, but, *Could ye not watch with me one hour?* And when they had not a word to say for themselves, so inexcusable was their fault, he had something to say for them, and instead of accusing them, he Apologizeth for them, *The Spirit indeed is willing, but the Flesh is weak*, *Mat. 26. 40, 41.* When *Peter* had denied him, and had cursed and sworn he did not know him, than which (besides the falshood and perfidiousness of it) nothing could be more unkind, with what Meekness did he bear it? It is not said, the Lord turn'd and frown'd upon *Peter*, tho' he deserv'd to be frown'd into Hell, but the Lord turn'd and *looked* upon *Peter*, *Luke 22. 61.* and that Look recovered him into the way to Heaven; it was a kind Look, and not an angry one. Some days after when Christ and *Peter* met in *Galilee*, and had Dined together in token of Reconciliation, and some Discourse past between them, not a word was said of this matter; Christ did not upbraid him with his fault, nor chide him for it, nor did there appear any other Fruit of the falling out of these Lovers, but only the renewing of their Love with greater



ter Endearments, *John* 21. 15, 16, 17. which teacheth us to forgive and forget the Unkindnesses of those that (we are satisfied) are for the main our true Friends, and if any occasion of Difference happen, to turn it into an occasion of confirming our love to them, as the Apostle expresseth it, *2 Cor.* 2. 8.

3. He was very meek towards his Enemies, that hated and persecuted him. The whole Story of his Life is fill'd with instances of invincible Meekness; while he *endur'd the Contradiction of Sinners against himself*, which was a constant Jarr, yet he had a perpetual Serenity and Harmony within himself, and was never in the least discomposed by it. When his Preaching and Miracles were cavill'd at and reproached, and he himself represented under the blackest Characters, not only as the *Drunkard's Companion*, but as the *Devil's Confederate*, with what a wonderful calmness did he bear it? How mildly did he answer, with Reason and Tenderness, when he could have replied in Thunder and Lightning? How well satisfied under all such invidious Reflections with this, that *Wisdom is however justified of all her Children?* *Mat.* 11. 19. When some of his Disciples would have had *Fire from Heaven* upon those rude People that refused him Entertainment in their Town, he was so far from complying with the Motion, that he rebuked it, *Luke* 9. 55. *Ye know not what manner of Spirit ye are of. This perswasion cometh not of him that calleth you,* *Gal.* 5. 8. The design of Christ and of his Holy Religion is to shape Men into a mild and merciful Temper, and to make them sensibly tender of the Lives and Comforts even of their worst Enemies. Christianity was intended

intended to revive Humanity, and to make those Men, who had made themselves *Beasts*. But our Lord Jesus did in a more especial manner evidence his Meekness when he was in his last sufferings, that *awful Scene*. Tho' he was the most innocent and the most excellent Person that ever was, who by the Doctrine he had preach'd, and the Miracles he had wrought, had richly deserved all the Honours and Respects that the World could pay him, and infinitely more, and tho' the Injuries he received were ingeniously and industriously contrived to the highest degree of Affront and Provocation, yet he bore all with an undisturbed Meekness, and with that Shield quench'd all the fiery Darts, which his malicious Enemies shot at him.

His Meekness towards his Enemies appear'd,

(1.) In what he said to them, not one angry word, in the midst of all the Indignities they offer'd him. *When he was reviled, he reviled not again*, 1 Pet. 2. 23. When he was buffeted and spit upon, and abused, he took it all patiently, one would wonder at the gracious words which even then proceeded out of his Mouth, witness that mild reply to him that smote him, *Joh. 18. 23. If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil, but if well, why smitest thou me?*

(2.) In what he said to God for them; *Father forgive them*, — so giving an Example to his own Rule, *Mat. 5. 44. Pray for them which despitefully use you*. Though he was then deeply engaged in the most solemn Transaction that ever pass'd between Heaven and Earth, tho' he had so much to do with God for himself and his Friends, yet he did not forget to put up this Prayer for his Enemies. The mercy he begg'd of God for

for them, was the greatest Mercy, that which he was then dying to purchase and procure, the pardon of their sins; not only, Father spare them, or relieve them, but, *Father forgive them*; the Excuse he pleaded for them, was the best their Crime was capable of, *They know not what they do.* They did it ignorantly, *Acts 3. 27. 1 Cor. 2. 8. 1 Tim. 1. 17.*

Now in all these things our Master hath left us an Example. What is the Practice of Religion, but the Imitation of God endeavour'd by us? And what the Principle of it, but the Image of God renewed in us. We are bid to be followers of God, *as dear Children.* But this sets the Copy we are to *write after*, at a mighty distance, for God is in Heaven, and we are upon Earth, and therefore in the *Lord Jesus Christ, God incarnate*, God in our Nature, the Copy is brought among us, and the transcribing of it, in some measure, appears more practicable: *He that hath seen me,* (saith Christ) *hath seen the Father,* John 14. 9. and so he that imitates Christ, imitates the Father. The Religion which our Lord Jesus came into the World to establish, being every way so well calculated for the Peace and Order of the World, and being design'd to recover the lapsed Souls of Men from their degenerate State, and to sweeten their Spirits and Temper, and so to befriend humane Society, and to make it some way conformable to the blessed Society above, he not only gave such Precepts as were wonderfully fitted to this great end, but recommended them to the World, by the loveliness and amiableness of his own Example. Are we not called *Christians* from Christ, whom we call *Master* and *Lord*, and shall we not endeavour to accommodate our  
I selves

selves to him? We profess to rejoyce in him, as our Fore-runner, and shall we not run after him? To what purpose were we listed under his Banner, but that we might follow him as our Leader? We have all of us reason to say, that Jesus Christ is very meek, or else we that have provok'd him so much and so often, had been in *Hell* long ago: We owe it to his Meekness to whom all Judgment is committed, that we have not e're this been carryed away with a swift Destruction, and *dealt with according to the desert of our sins*, which, if duly considered, one would think should tend greatly to the mollifying of us. The Apostle fetcheth an Argument from that Kindness and Love to us, which we our selves have experienced, who were Foolish and Disobedient, to perswade us to *be gentle, and to shew all Meekness*, Tit. 3. 2, 3, 4. and he beseecheth the *Corinthians by the Meekness and Gentleness of Christ*, as a thing very winning and of dear and precious account, 2 Cor. 10. 1. *Let the same mind therefore be in us*, not only which was, but which, as we find to our comfort, *still is in Christ Jesus*, Phil. 2. 5. That we may not forfeit our Interest in his Meekness, let us tread in the steps of it; and as ever we hope to be like him in Glory hereafter, let us study to be like him in Grace, in this Grace now. It is a certain Rule, by which we must all be tried shortly, *That if any Man hath not the Spirit of Christ*, (that is, if he be not Spirited, in some measure, as Christ was spirited) *he is none of his*, Rom. 8. 9. And if we be not own'd as his, *we are undone for ever*.

SECT. III.

*Some particular Instances wherein the Exercise of Meekness is in a special manner requir'd.*

The Rule is general, we must *shew all Meekness*; 'twill be of use to observe some special *cases* to which the *Scripture* applies this general Rule.

1. We must give Reproofs with Meekness. It is the Apostles Direction, *Gal. 6. 1. If a Man be overtaken in a fault, (i.e. if he be surpriz'd by a Temptation and overcome, as the best may be, if God leave them to themselves) ye which are spiritual, restore such a one in the Spirit of Meekness.* By the Spiritual Man, to whom he gives this Rule, he means not Ministers only, as if none were spiritual but they, tho' they perhaps are chiefly intended, because they are, as the Prophet speaks, *Isa. 29. 21. Reprovers in the Gate, i.e. Reprovers by Office*, yet doubtless it is a Rule to private Christians; all that have opportunity must reprove, and all that reprove must do it with Meekness. *Ye that are spiritual*, if you would approve yourselves so indeed, acted by the Holy Spirit, and minding the things of the Spirit, be careful in this matter. Especially let those that are Christians of the highest Form, that excel in Grace, and Holiness, and the best Gifts, (such are call'd *Spiritual* in distinction from the Babes in Christ, *1 Cor. 3. 1.*) Let them look upon themselves as obliged, in a more peculiar manner, to help others, for where God gives five Talents, he expects the improvement of five; the strong must *bear the infirmities of the weak*, *Rom. 15. 1. Do you therefore restore such a one, namely, set him in joynt again.* The setting of a dislocated joynt or

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a broken Bone is for the present painful to the Patient, but it must be done, and it is in order to the making of *broken Bones to rejoyce*. Now this you must do with the Spirit of Meekness, with all the candor, and gentleness, and convincing Evidences of Love and Kindness that can be. The three Qualifications of a good Surgeon, are very requisite in a Reprover, *viz.* to have an *Eagle's Eye*, a *Lion's Heart*, and a *Lady's Hand*; that is, that he be endued with a great deal of *Wisdom*, and *Courage*, and *Meekness*. Tho' sometimes it is needful to reprove with warmth, yet we must never reprove with Wrath, for the *Wrath of Man worketh not the Righteousness of God*. Jam. 1. 20. There is an observable Difference, but no contradiction betwixt the Directions *Paul* gives to *Timothy*, and those he gives to *Titus* in this matter. To *Titus* he writes to *reprove sharply*, Tit. 1. 13. and to *rebuke with all Authority*, Cap. 2. v. 15. To *Timothy* he writes *not to strive*, but to be *gentle*, 2 Tim. 2. 24. to reprove with *all long suffering*, Chap. 4. 2. The Reason of which may be taken either, [1.] From the different Temper of those they had to deal with. *Timothy* was among the *Ephesians*, a tractable complaisant People, that would be easily managed, and with them he must always deal gently. *Titus* was among the *Cretians*, that were head-strong and rough hewn, and not to be wrought upon, but by sharper methods. Thus in reprovng, a difference must be made: Of some we must have compassion, and others save with Fear, but never with Anger, plucking them out of the fire, *Jude*, ver. 23. Or, [2.] The Reason may be taken (as *Gregory*, one of the Antients, assigneth it) from the different Temper of *Timothy* and *Titus*. *Titus* was a Man



of a very soft and mild Temper, and he had need of a Spur to quicken him to a needful Acrimony in his Reproofs; but *Timothy* was a Man of a more warm and sanguine Temper, and he had need of a Bridle to keep him from an intemperate heat in his Reproofs; and then it teacheth us, that those who are *naturally* keen and fervent, should double their Guard upon their own Spirits, when they are reprovng, that they may do it with all Meekness. Christ's Ministers must be careful while they display God's Wrath, to conceal their own, & be very jealous over themselves, lest sinful Anger shelter it self under the Cloke of Zeal against sin. When Reproving (whoever be the Reprover) degenerates into Railing and Reviling, and Opprobrious Language, how can we expect the desir'd success? It may provoke to Contention and every evil Work; but it will never provoke to Love, and to good Works. The work of Heaven is not likely to be done by a Tongue set on fire of Hell. Hath Christ need of mad Men? or will you talk deceitfully and passionately for him? A Potion given too hot scalds the Patient, and doth more hurt than good; and so many a Reproof, good for the matter of it, hath been spoiled by an irregular Management. Meekness hides the Lancet, gilds the Pill, and makes it passable; dips the Nail in Oil, and then it drives the better. Twice we find *Jonathan* reprovng his Father, for his rage against *David*; once he did it with Meekness, and it sped well, 1 Sam. 19. 4, 5. *Let not the King sin against his Servant, [against David,] and 'tis said, v. 6: Saul hearkned to him.* But another time his Spirit was provok'd, and he did it in a heat, Cap. 20. 32. *Wherefore shall he be slain? and the issue of it was ill. Saul was not only im-*

patient of the Reproof, but enraged at the Reprover, and cast a Javelin at him, v. 33. Reproofs are then likely to answer the intention, when they manifestly evidence the good will of the Reprover, and are made up of soft Words and hard Arguments. This is to restore with the Spirit of Meekness, and there's a good reason added, considering thy self; ille hodie, ego cras; those who think they stand fast, know not how soon they may be shaken and overthrown, and therefore we must treat those that are overtaken in a fault, with the same tenderness and compassion that we would wish to find, if it were our own case.

*Neg, ulli  
patientius  
reprehenduntur, quam  
qui maxime  
laudari  
merentur.  
Plin.*

2. We must receive Reproofs with Meekness. If we do that which deserves Rebuke, and we meet with those that are so just and kind to give it us, we must be quiet under it, not quarrelling with the Reprover, nor objecting against the Reproof, nor fretting that we are touch'd in a sore place, but submit to it, and laying our Souls under the Conviction of it. If Reproofs be Physick, it becomes us to be Patient. Let the Righteous smite me, it shall be a Kindness, and an excellent Oil, healing to the wounds of Sin, and making the face to shine; and let us never reckon that it breaks the Head, if it do but help to break the Heart, Psa. 141. 5. Meekness suffers the word of Admonition, and takes it patiently and thankfully, not only from the hand of God that sends it, but from the hand of our Friend that brings it. We must not be like the Reprobate Sodomites, Gen. 19. 9. or that pert Hebrew, Exod. 2. 14. that flew in the Face of their Reprovers, (tho' really they were the best Friends they had) with, Who made thee a Judge? but like David, who, when Abigail so prudently scotch'd the Wheels of his Passion,

sion, not only bless'd God that sent her, and blessed her Advice, but blessed her, *1 Sam. 25. 32, 33. and v. 35. not only hearkned to her Voice, but accepted her Person.* Tho perhaps the Reprover supposeth the fault greater than really it was, and though the Reproof be not given with all the Prudence in the World, yet Meekness will teach us to accept it quietly, and to make the best use we can of it; nay, if indeed we be altogether innocent of that which we are reprov'd for, yet the Meekness of Wisdom would teach us to apply the Reproof to some other fault, which our own Consciences convict us of: We would not quarrel with a real intended *Kindness*, tho' not done with *Ceremony*, & tho' in some circumstances *mistaken* or *misplac'd*.

You that are in Inferior Relations, Children, Servants, Scholars, must with all Meekness and Submission receive the Reproofs of your Parents, Masters and Teachers: Their Age supposeth them to have more Understanding than you; however, their Place gives them an Authority over you, to which you are to pay a *Deference*, and in which you are to *acquiesce*, else farewell all Order and Peace in Societies. The Angel rebuked *Hagar* for flying from her Mistress, tho' she dealt *hardly* with her, and obliged her to return and submit herself *under her hands*, *Gen. 16. 6, 9. If the Spirit of any Ruler rise up against thee*, and thou be chidden for a Fault, *leave not thy Place*, as an Inferior, *for yielding pacifies great offences done*, and prevents the like, *Eccl. 10. 4. If thou hast thought evil, lay thy hand upon thy Mouth*, to keep that evil thought from breaking out in any undue and unbecoming Language, *Pro. 30. 32. Reproofs are then likely to do us good*, when we meekly submit to them; then are they as an *Earring of Gold*.

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Gold, and an Ornament of fine Gold, when an obedient Ear is given to a wise Reprover, Pro. 25. v. 12. Nay, even Superiors are to receive Reproofs from their Inferiors with Meekness, as they would any other Token of Kindness and Goodwill. Naaman when he turn'd away from the Prophet in a rage, yet hearkned to the Reproof which his own Servants gave him, and was overrul'd by the Reason of it, 2 Kin. 5. 11, 13, 14. which was no more a disparagement to him, than it was to receive Instruction from his Wife's Maid, to whom to go for a cure of his Leprosie, v. 2, 3. Meekness teacheth us, when a just Reproof is given, to regard not so much who speaks, as what is spoken.

3. We must instruct Gain-sayers with Meekness, 2 Tim. 2. 24, 25. It is there prescrib'd to Ministers, that they must not strive, but be gentle to all Men, in Meekness instructing those that oppose themselves. They serve the Prince of Peace, they preach the Gospel of Peace, they are the Ambassadors of Peace, and therefore must be sure to keep the Peace. The Apostles, those prime Ministers of State in Christ's Kingdom, were not Military Men, or Men of strife and noise, but Fishermen that follow their Employment with quietness and silence. 'Tis highly necessary that the Guides of the Church be strict Governours of their own Passions. Learn of me (saith Christ) for I am meek and lowly, and therefore fit to teach you, Mat. 11. 29. We must contend earnestly, but not angrily and passionately, no not for the Faith once delivered to the Saints, Jude, v. 3. when we have never so great an assurance, that it is the cause of Truth we are pleading, yet we must so manage our Defence of it, against those who gain-say, as to make it appear, that it is not the Con-  
fusion

*fusion of the Erroneous, but the Confutation of the Error that we intend. This Meekness would teach us not to prejudge a Cause, nor to condemn an Adversary unheard, but calmly to state matters in difference, as knowing that a Truth well open'd, is half confirm'd. It would teach us not to aggravate matters in dispute, nor to father upon an Adversary all the absurd Consequences which we think may be inferr'd from his Opinion: It would teach us to judge charitably of those that differ from us, and to forbear all personal Reflections in arguing with them. God's Cause needs not the Patronage of our sinful Heats and Passions, which not only shatter the Peace, but often give a mighty shock even to the Truth it self, we plead for. Meekness would prevent and cure that Bigotry, which hath been so long the Bane of the Church, and contribute a great deal towards the Advancement of that happy State, in which, notwithstanding little Differences of Apprehension and Opinion, the Lord shall be one, and his Name one. Publick Reformati<sup>o</sup>ns are carry'd on with most Credit and Comfort, and are most likely to settle upon lasting Foundations, when Meekness sits at the Stern, and guides the Motions of them. When Christ was purging the Temple, tho' he was therein acted by a Zeal for God's House that even eat him up, yet he did it with Meekness and Prudence, which appear'd in this instance, that when he drove out the Sheep and Oxen, which would easily be caught again, he said to them that sold Doves, *Take these things hence.* Joh. 2. 16. He did not let loose the Doves, and send them flying, for that would have been to the loss and prejudice of the Owners. Angry, noisie, bitter Arguings,*

Arguings, ill become the Asserters of that *Truth*, which is *great and will prevail*, without all that adoe. It was a very froward and perverse Generation that our Lord Jesus lived in; and yet it is said, *Mat. 12. 19. He shall not strive, nor cry, neither shall any Man hear his Voice in the Street*, tho' he could have broke them as easily as a bruised Reed; and extinguish'd them as soon as one could quench the *wick* of a *Candle* newly lighted, yet he will not do it, till the day comes when he shall bring forth *Judgment unto Victory*. *Moses* dealt with a very obstinate and stiff-neck'd People, *And yet my Doctrine* (saith he) *shall drop as the Dew, and distil as the small Rain*, *Deut. 32. 2.* 'Twas not the Wind, nor the Earthquake, nor the Fire that brought *Elijah* into Temper, (for the *Lord was not in them*) but the *still small Voice* did it, when he heard that; he *wrap'd his Face in his Mantle*, *1 Kin. 19. 11, 12, 13.* In dealing with Gain-sayers, a Spirit of Meekness will teach us to consider their Temper, Education, Custom, the Power of Prejudice they Labour under, the Influence of others upon them, and to make Allowances accordingly, and not to call (as passionate Contenders are apt to do) every false Step, an Apostacy, every Errour and Mistake, nay, every Misconstrued Misplaced Word, a Heresie, and every Misdemeanor, no less than *Treason* and *Rebellion*; Methods of Proceeding, more likely to irritate and harden, than to convince and reduce Gain-sayers. I have heard it observed long since, *That the Scourge of the Tongue hath driven many out of the Temple, but never drove any into it.*

4. We must make Profession of the *Hope* that is in us, with *Meekness*. *1 Pet. 3. 15. Be ready always to give Answer,* (to make your Defence



or *Apology*, so the word is, ἵνα μὴ πρὸς ἀπολογία (an) whether judicially or extrajudicially, as there is occasion, *to every Man that* (soberly, not scoffingly, and in derision) *asks you a Reason, or an Account of the hope that is in you, i. e. of the Religion you profess, which you hope to be saved by, with Meekness and Fear.* Observe, it is very well consistent with Christian Quietness, to appear in the Defence of Truth, and to avow our Christian Profession, when at any time we are duly call'd to it. That is not Meekness, but base Cowardise that tamely betrays, and delivers up any of Christ's Truths or Institutions, by silence, as if we were ashamed or afraid to confess our Master. But the Office of Meekness at such a time is to direct us how, and in what manner to bear our Testimony, not with Pride and Passion, but with Humility and Mildness. Those that would successfully confess the Truth, must first learn to deny themselves; And we must give an account of our Hope, with a Holy Fear of missing it in such a Critical Juncture. When we give a Reason for our Religion, we must not boast of ourselves, or of our own Attainments, nor reflect Contempt and Wrath upon our Persecutors, but remember that the *present Truth*, (so 'tis call'd, 2 Pet. 1. 12) the Truth which is now to be asserted, is the same with *the Word of Christ's Patience*, Rev. 3. 10. i. e. the word which must be patiently suffered for, according to the Example of him, who with invincible Meekness, (*before Pontius Pilate*) witnessed a good Confession, 1 Tim. 6. 13. A great *Abasement* and *Diffidence* of our selves may very well consist with a firm *Assurance* of the Truth, and a profound *Veneration* for it.

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In lesser things, wherein wise and good Men are not all of a mind, Meekness teaches us not to be too confident that we are in the right, nor to censure and condemn those that differ us, as if we were *the People*, and *Wisdom should die with us*, but quietly to walk according to the Light that God hath given us, and charitably to believe that others do so too, waiting till God shall reveal either this to them, (*Phil. 3. 15.*) or that to us. Let it in such cases suffice to *vindicate our selves*; which every Man hath a right to do, without a Magisterial Sentencing of others; why should we be many Masters, when we are all Offenders, (*Jam. 3. 1, 2.*) and the *Bar* is our place, not the *Bench*? Meekness will likewise teach us to manage a singular opinion, wherein we differ from others, with all possible deference to them, and suspicion of our selves, not resenting it as an Affront to be Contradicted, but taking it as a Kindness to be better inform'd. Nor must we be angry that our Hope is enquir'd into, even such a trial of it, if we approve our selves well in it, may be *found to Praise, and Honour, and Glory*, to which our Meekness will very much contribute, as it puts a lustre upon, and a convincing Power into the Testimony we bear; we then walk worthy of the *vocation wherewith we are called*, *when we walk in all lowliness and meekness*, *Eph. 4. 1, 2.*

5. We must bear Reproaches with Meekness. Reproach is a branch of that Persecution which *all that will live godly in Christ Jesus*, must count upon; and we must submit to it, behaving our selves quietly, and with a due *decorum*, not only when *Princes sit and speak against us*, but even when the *Abjects gather themselves together*

ther against us, and we become the Song of the Drunkards. Sometimes we find it easier to keep calm in a solemn and expected Engagement, than in a sudden Skirmish, or a hasty Rencounter, and therefore even against those slight Attacks, it is requisite that Meekness be set upon the Guard. If we be nick-named, and slandered, and have all manner of Evil said against us falsely, our Rule is, *Not to be disturbed at it, nor to render Railing for Railing*, 1 Pet. 3. 9. but tho' we may, as we have opportunity, with Meekness deny the Charge, as Hannab did when Eli overhastily censur'd her for a Drunkard; *No, my Lord, I have drank neither Wine nor strong Drink*, 1 Sam. 1. 15. Yet when that is done, we must without meditating any Revenge, quietly commit our Cause to God, who will sooner or later, clear up our Innocency as the Light, which is promised, *Psal. 37. 5, 6. and therefore fret not thy self, but wait patiently, v. 7. cease from Anger, and forsake Wrath, v. 8* Mr. Dod was wont to charm his Friends into silence under Reproaches, with this, *That if a Dog bark at a Sheep, the Sheep will not bark at the Dog again.* We do but gratifie our great Adversary, and do his Work for him, when we suffer the Peace and Serenity of our Minds to be broken in upon, by the Reproaches of the World: For me to disquiet my self, and put my self into a Passion, because another abuseth me, is as if I should scratch up the Skin of my Face, to fetch off the Dirt which my Adversary throws in it. When reproaches provokes our Passions, which put us upon rendring Bitterness for Bitterness, we thereby lose the Comfort, and forfeit the Honour and Reward, which the Divine Promise hath annexed to the Reproach of Christ, and shall we suffer so many things in vain?

We

We likewise thereby give occasion to those who had spoken evil of us *falsly*, to speak evil of us *truly*; and perhaps our Religion suffers more by our *Impatience* under the Reproach, than by the Reproach it self. What have we the Law, and Pattern, and Promise of Christ for, but to calm our Spirits under Reproaches for well doing? Truly those can bear but a little for Christ, that cannot bear a hard or a foul word for him. If we either faint, or fret in such a *Day of Adversity*, 'tis a sign our *Strength* is *small* indeed. May it not fastise us, that by our Meekness and Quietness under Reproaches, we engage God for us, who hath promised, that he will *with Righteousness judge the Poor*, the poor in Spirit, and will *reprove with equity for the meek of the Earth*, Isa. 11. v. 4. He that hath bid us to *open our Mouths for the Dumb*, Pro. 31. 8. will not himself be silent, Psa. 12. 5. And shall we not learn at last, instead of fretting and being exceeding Angry, to *rejoyce and to be exceeding glad*, Mat. 5. 11, 12. when we suffer thus for Righteousness sake? May we not put such Reproaches as Pearls, in our Crown, and be assured that they will pass well in the Account another day, when there will be an advantagious Resurrection of *Names*, as well as *Bodies*, in the prospect of which, we have reason to rejoyce, That we are counted worthy to *suffer shame for his Name*, Acts 5. 41. That we are honour'd to be dishonour'd for him, who for our sakes endured the Cross, and despised the *shame*. 'Tis one of the Laws of Meekness, *Spernere se sperni*; to despise being despised.

*Dominus ipse maledictus est, & tamen solus est benedictus.* Tertul. de Patient. cap. 8.

SECT. IV.

*Some good Principles or Considerations, which tend to make us meek and quiet.*

In order to the well governing of the Soul, the Judgment must be furnished with proper *Dictates*, else it will never be able to keep the Peace in the *Affections*: The Motions of the Soul are then likely to be even, and regular, and constant, when we have fix'd to our selves good *Principles*, which we are govern'd by, and act under the influence of. There are some carnal corrupt *Principles*, which angry froward People are guided by; such as these, *That the forgiving one Injury invites another*, whereas it often qualifies an Adversary; or if otherwise, the forgiving of one Offence, will enable us to bear the next the more easily. And that we must have *Satisfaction* given us for every wrong done us, whereas if we have not *Satisfaction* for it, yet if it be not our own Fault, we may have *Satisfaction* under it, and that's as good. And, *That there's no living in the World without buffing, and beltoring, and frightening People*; *Oderint dum metuant*; whereas to live continually in that Element, is to live in a Hell upon Earth; mutual *Indignation* and mutual *Fear* perhaps contributing to the Torment of Devils and damned Spirits: But, in opposition to these and the like ill *Principles*, shall we treasure up these few good Truths, chosen out of many which might be mentioned proper for this purpose, and make use of them, as there is occasion?

*Veterem ferendo injuriam, invitas novam.  
P. Animus.*

1. *That he hath the sweetest and surest Peace, who is the most Master of his own Passions.* The comfort

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comfort that a Man hath in governing himself, is much greater than he could have in having People to serve him, and Nations to bow down to him. It is certain the worst Enemies we have, if ever they break loose and get head, are in our own *Bosoms*. Enemies without threaten only the evil of pain; they can but kill the Body, and no great hurt in that to a Child of God, if they do not provoke the Enemies within, our own irregular Passions, which if they be not kept under, plunge us in the evil of sin, and that's the much greater evil. An Invasion from Abroad doth not so much disturb the Peace of a Kingdom, as an *Insurrection* at Home doth; and therefore it concerns us to double our Guard, where our danger is greatest, and above all *keepings*, to keep our Hearts, that no Passion be allowed to stir without a good reason to be given for it, and a good use to be made of it; and then if we be troubled on every side, yet not distressed, perplexed, yet not in despair, 2 Cor. 4.8,9. Offended by our Fellow-Servants, but not offending our Master; reproached by our Neighbours but not by our own Consciences; this is like Zion's Peace, Peace within the Walls, Psa. 122. 7. We have need to pray as one did, *Liberame a malo isto homine, meipso*. Lord deliver me from that ill Man, mine own self, and then I am safe enough. The Lusts that war in our Members, Jam. 4.1. are the Enemies that war against our Souls, 1 Pet. 2. 11. If this War be brought to a good issue, and those Enemies suppressed, whatever other Disturbances are given, Peace is in the Soul with Grace and Mercy from God, and from the Lord Jesus. Nehemiah was aware of this, as the design of his Enemies, when they hired a pretended Prophet to give an Alarm, and  
to



to advise him meanly to shift for himself, it was (saith he) *Neh. 6. 13. That I should be afraid and do so, and sin.* Whatever we lose, we shall not lose our Peace, if we do but keep our Integrity; therefore instead of being solicitous to subdue our Enemies that lay Siege to us, let us double our watch against the Traitors within the *Garrison*, from whom especially our danger is; since we cannot prevent the shooting of the *fiery Darts*, let us have our *Shield* ready, wherewith to quench them. If we would not hurt our selves, blessed be God no Enemy in the World can hurt us. Let us but keep the Peace within, by the governing of our own Passions, and then whatever assaults may be made upon us, we may therein, with the *Daughter of Zion*, despise them, and laugh them to scorn, and shake our Head at them, [allud.] *Isa. 37. 22.* Let us believe, that in hurrying and disquieting times, *our strength is to sit still*, in a holy Quietness and Composure of Mind; *This is the rest, wherewith you may cause the weary to rest; and this is the refreshing*, and it is enough, *Isa. 28. 12.*

2. *That in many things we all offend.* This truth we have, *James 3. 2.* and it comes in as a reason why we must not be many Masters, *v. 1.* It would help to subdue and moderate our Anger, at the Offences of others, if we would but consider,

[1.] That it is *incident to humane Nature to offend.* While we are in this World, we must not expect to converse with Angels, or the Spirits of just Men made perfect; no, we are oblig'd to a Communication with Creatures that are foolish and corrupt, peevish and provoking, and who are all subject to like Passions, such as these we must live among, else must we needs go out

of the World. And have we not reason then to count upon something or other, uneasie and displeasing in all Relations and Conversations. The best Men have their roughnesses and unevennesses in this imperfect state; those that are sayingly enlightned, yet knowing but *in part*, have their *blind side*; the *Harmony*, even of the Communion of Saints, will sometimes be disturbed with *jarring strings*; why then should we be surpriz'd into Passion and Disquiet, when that which gives us the Disturbance, is no more than what we look'd for? Instead of being angry, we should think with our selves, thus, *Alas! what could I expect but Provocation, from corrupt and fallen Man?* Among such foolish Creatures as we are, *it must needs be, that Offences will come*, and why should not I have my share of those Offences? The God of Heaven gives this as a reason of his Patience towards a provoking World, that it is in their Nature to be provoking, *Gen. 3. 21. I will not again curse the Ground any more for Man's sake, for the imagination of Man's Heart is evil from his Youth*, and therefore better is not to be expected from him. And upon this inducement he had compassion on Israel, *Psal. 78. 39. For he remembered that they were but Flesh, not only frail Creatures, but sinful, and bent to backslide, Do Men gather Grapes of Thorns? I knew that thou wouldst deal treacherously, for thou wast called a Transgressor from the Womb, Isa. 48. 8.* And should not we, much more, be qualified by the same consideration? *If thou seest the violent perverting of Judgement and Justice in a Province, remember what a provoking Creature sinful Man is, and then thou wilt not marvel at the matter, Eccl. 5. 8.* The consideration of the common Infirmary

and

and Corruption of Mankind, should be made use of, not to excuse our own Faults to our selves, which doth take off the edge of our Repentance, and is the poor Subterfuge of a deceived Heart; but to excuse the faults of others, and so take off the edge of our Passion and Displeasure, and preserve the Meekness and Quietness of our Spirits.

[2.] That it is incident to our selves among the rest to offend. The Apostle there puts himself into the number, *We all offend.* We offend God; if we say, we do not, *we deceive our selves*, and yet he bears with us from day to day, and is not extream to mark what we do amiss; tho' our Debts to him are *Talents*, our Brethren's to us but *Pence*. Think then, if God should be as angry with me for every Provocation, as I am with those about me, what would become of me? They are careless in their observance, and perhaps wilful in their offence, and am not I so to God? yea, am not I a thousand times worse? *Jeb* qualified himself with this, when his Servants were provoking, and he was tempted to be harsh with them, *What then shall I do, when God riseth up? and when he visiteth, what shall I answer him?* Job 31.13, 14.

ὁ βεβιω-  
σας ὁ συνδουλός,  
καὶ οὐ τὸν  
θεόν ὁ βέλ-  
λει πολλά.  
καὶ πῶς δ'  
λοῦν συνδου-  
λόν; καὶ τίς ἀπο-  
κρίσεται. Chrys.

And are we not apt enough likewise, to offend our Brethren? Either we have offended or may offend; so that we have need that others should bear with us, & why then should not we bear with them? *Hanc veniam petimusq; damusq; vicissim.* Our Rule is, *What we would that Men should do to us, when we offend them, the same we should do to them, when they offend us*, for this is the Law and the Prophets, Mat. 7. 12. \* Solomon appeals to our own Consciences herein, Eccl. 7. 22.

Pacienter illa-  
tam injuriam  
tolerat qui pie  
meminit quod  
fortasse adhuc  
habeat in quo  
debeat ipse to-  
lerari Greg. M.  
in Job. l. 5. c. 32.

\* Cogitamus  
alios non facere  
injuriam, sed  
respondere. Sen.

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For oftentimes also thine own Heart (which is instead of a thousand Witnesses) knoweth that thou thy self likewise hath cursed others. The penitent remembrance of that former guilt, would greatly help to curb the passionate Resentment of the present Trouble. When the undutiful. Rebellious Son (in a Story that I once read) drag'd his Father by the Hair of the Head to the House-door, it qualified the Anger of the old Man, to remember, that just so far he had drag'd his Father, as it seems to have silenced *Adonibezek*, that he was now treated no otherwise, than he had formerly treated others, *Judg. 1. 7.*

3. That *Men are God's Hand*: So it is said, *Psal. 17. 14.* From Men which are thy Hand, O Lord, or rather, Tools in thy Hand, so *v. 13.* which are thy Sword. We must abide by this Principle, that whatever it is that crosseth us, or is displeasing to us, at any time, God hath an overruling hand in it. *David* was govern'd by this Principle, when he bore *Shimei's* spiteful Reproaches, with such an invincible Patience, So let him curse, because the Lord hath said unto him, Curse David, *2 Sam. 16. 10.* and *v. 11.* Let him alone, for the Lord hath bidden him. This consideration will not only silence our Murmurings against God, [the Author] but all our Quarrellings with Men, [the Instruments of our Trouble and Vexation. Men's Reproaches are God's Rebukes, and whoever he be that affronts me, I must see and say, that therein my Father corrects me. This quieted the Spirit of *Job*, in reference to the Injuries of the *Caldeans* and *Sabeans*, though he dwelt as a King in the Army, chap. 29. 25. and his Power and Interest seems to have been unstain'd, when those Rapparees first made

made that inroad upon him, and so he could not but see his help in the Gate, yet we find him not meditating any Revenge, but charming the Disturbances of his own Soul, with the consideration of God's Sovereign disposal, overlooking all the Instruments of his Trouble, thoughts of which would but have mingled *Anger* (the more disquieting Passion) with his *Sorrow*; this therefore sufficeth to still the storm, *The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, Blessed be the name of the Lord*, chap. 1. 21. When his Brethren stood aloof from him, his Kindred and his Friends looked scornfully upon him, *as an Alien*, and instead of Oil pour'd Vinegar into his Wounds, so that his *Eye continued in their Provocation*, yet even in that part of his Trouble he owns the hand of God, *Chap. 19. 13. He hath put my Brethren far from me.* It is a very quieting Truth, (the Lord help us to mix Faith with it) That *every Creature is that to us, and no more, that God makes it to be*, and that while many seek the Ruler's Favour, and more perhaps fear the Ruler's Displeasure, *Every Man's Judgment proceedeth from the Lord.* Would we but more closely observe, and readily own the Hand of God, in that which disquiets and provokes us, surely, though we regarded not Man, yet if we had any fear of God before our Eyes, that would reconcile us better to it, and suppress all intemperate and undue Resentments. In snarling at the Stone, we reflect upon the Hand that throws it, and lay our selves under the Woe pronounced against him, *that strives with his Maker*, Isa. 45. 9. We know it is interpreted, *a taking up Arms against the King*, if we take

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up Arms against any that are commissioned by him.

4. That *there is no Provocation given us at any time, but, if it be skilfully and graciously improved, there is good to be gotten by it.* If we have but that Wisdom of the Prudent, which is *to understand his way,* and all the Advantages and Opportunities of it, doubtless we may, quite contrary to the intencion of those that trespass against us, gain some *spiritual*, that is, some *real* Benefit to our Souls, by the Injuries and Offences that are done to us, for even these are made to *work together for good to them that love God.* This is a Holy and a Happy way of opposing our Adversaries, and resisting evil. 'Tis an ill Weed indeed out of which the *Spiritual Bee* cannot extract something profitable, and for it's purpose. Whatever Lion roars against us, let us but go in the Strength and Spirit of the Lord, as *Samson* did, and we may not only *rend it as a Kid,* so that it shall do us no real harm, but we may withal get *Meat out of the Eater, and Sweetness out of the Strong.* As it turns to the unspeakable Prejudice of many that they look upon Reproofs as Reproaches, and treat them accordingly with Anger and Displeasure, so it would turn to our unspeakable Advantage, if we could but learn to call Reproaches *Reproofs,* and make use of them as such, for our Conviction and Humiliation; and thus the Reproach of Christ, may become true Riches to us, and greater than the *Treasures of Egypt.*

We are told of an Imposthume that was cured with the thrust of an Enemies Sword, and  
of



of one that was happily converted from Drunkenness, by being called, in Reproach, a *Tipler*. It is very possible we may be enlightened, or humbled, or reformed, may be brought nearer to God, or weaned from the World, may be furnished with matter for Repentance, or Prayer, or Praise, by the Injuries that are done us, and may be much furthered in our way to Heaven, by that which was intended for an Affront or Provocation. This Principle would put another Aspect upon Injuries, and Unkindnesses, and would quite alter the Property of them, and teach us to call them by another Name: Whatever the Subordinate Instrument intended, it is likely *he meant not so, neither did his Heart think so*, Isa. 10. 7. but God designed it as other our Afflictions, to yield the *peaceable Fruit of Righteousness*; so that instead of being angry at the Man that meant us ill, we should rather be thankful to the God, that intended us good, and study to answer his Intention. This kept *Joseph* in that good Temper towards his Brethren, tho' he had occasion enough to quarrel with them, Gen. 50. 20. *You thought evil against me, but God meant it unto good*. This satisfied *Paul*, in reference to the *Thorn in the Flesh*, i. e. the Calumnies and Oppositions of the false Apostles, which touch'd him more sensibly than all the Efforts of persecuting Rage; that it was intended to hide Pride from him, lest he should be exalted above measure, with the abundance of Revelations, 2 Cor. 12. 7. and there seems to be an instance of that good effect it had upon him, immediately upon the mention of it, for within a few Lines after he lets fall that humble word, *verse 11. I am no*

παρασση  
της ανθρω-  
που ε το  
πρωματι  
αλλα το  
πρι των  
πρωματων  
δουλας.  
Επισ. Ενε.  
6. 10.

*thing.* We should be apt to think too highly of our selves, and too kindly of the World, if we did not meet with some Injuries and Contempts, by which we are taught to cease from Man. Did we but more carefully study the *Improvement* of an Injury, we should not be so apt to desire the *Revenge* of it.

5. *That what is said and done in haste is likely to be matter for a deliberate Repentance.* We find David often remembering with regret, what he *said in his haste*, particularly one angry word he had said in the day of his Distress and Trouble, which seem'd to reflect upon *Samuel*, and indeed upon all that had given him any Encouragement to hope for the Kingdom, *Psal. 116. 11. I said in my haste, All Men are Liars*; and this hasty word, was a grief to him long after. *He that hasteth with his feet sinneth, Prov. 19. 2.* When a Man is transported by Passion, into any Indecency, we commonly qualify it with this, that he is a little *hasty*, as if there were no harm in that, but we see there is harm in it; he that is in haste may contract much guilt in a little time. What we say or do unadvisedly when we are hot, we must unsay and undo again when we are cool, or do worse. Now who would wilfully do that, which sooner or later he *must* repent of? A Heathen that was tempted to a chargeable Sin, could resist the Temptation with this consideration, That he would not buy Repentance so dear. Is Repentance such a pleasant Work that we should so industriously *treasure up unto our selves wrath against the day of wrath*, either the day of God's Wrath against us, or our own against our selves. You little think what a Torrent of

of Self-affliction you let in when you let the Reins loose to an immoderate ungovern'd Passion. You are angry at others, and reproach them, and call them hard Names, and are ready to abhor them, and to revenge your selves upon them, and your corrupt Nature takes a strange kind of Pleasure in this. But do you know that all this will at last rebound in your own Faces, and return into your own Bosoms? Either here or in a worse Place, you must repent of all this, that is, you must turn all these Passions upon *your selves*, you must be *angry* at your selves, and *reproach* your selves, and call your selves *Fools*, and *abhor* your selves, and smite upon your own Breasts; nay, and if God give you Grace, take a Holy Revenge upon your selves (which is reckoned among the Products of *godly sorrow*, 2 Cor. 7. 11.) and what can be more uneasie than all this? You take a mighty Liberty in chiding those that you have under your Power, and giving them very ill-favoured Language, because you know they dare not chide you again; but dare not your own Hearts smite you, and your Consciences chide you? And is it not easier to bear the Chidings of any Man in the World, (which may either be avoided, or answered, or slighted) than to bear the Reproaches of our own Consciences, which, as we cannot get out of the hearing of, so we cannot make a light matter of; for when Conscience is awake it will be heard, and will tell us home, wherein *we are verily guilty concerning our Brother*, Gen. 42. 21. Let this Thought therefore quiet our Spirits, when they begin to be tumultuous, that hereby we shall but make work for Repentance; whereas, on the contrary,

as

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as *Abigail* suggested to *David*, 1 Sam. 25. 30, 31. The bearing and forgiving of an Injury, will be no trouble or grief of Mind afterwards. Let Wisdom and Grace therefore do that which Time will do however, cool our Heat, and take off the Edge of our Resentment.

6. That *that is truly best for us which is most pleasing and acceptable to God, and that a meek and quiet Spirit is so.* No Principle hath such a commanding influence upon the Soul, as that which hath a regard to God, and wherein we approve our selves to him. It was a good hint which the Woman of *Tekoa* gave to *David*, when she was suing for a Merciful Sentence, 2 Sam. 14. 11. *I pray thee, let the King remember the Lord thy God: —* Nor could any thought be more mollifying than that. Remember how gracious, and merciful, and patient God is, how slow to anger, how ready to forgive, and how well pleased he is to see his People like him: Remember the Eye of thy God upon thee, the Love of thy God towards thee, and the Glory of thy God set before thee. Remember how much it is thy concern to be accepted of God, and to walk worthy of thy relation to him, unto all well-pleasing, and how much Meekness and Quietness of Spirit, doth contribute to this, as it is consonant to that excellent Religion which our Lord Jesus hath establish'd, and as it renders the Heart a fit Habitation for the blessed Spirit, *This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, to lead quiet and peaceable Lives,* 1 Tim. 2. 2, 3. It is a good evidence of our Reconciliation to God, if we be cordially reconciled to every cross Providence, which necessarily includes a meek Behaviour towards those who are any way

way Instrumental in the Cross. Very excellently doth St. Austin express it (in *Psal. 122.*) *Quis placet Deo? cui Deus placuerit.* Those please God that are pleased with him, and with all he doth, whether immediately by his own hand, or mediately by the Agency of provoking injurious Men. This is standing compleat in all the Will of God, not only his commanding, but his disposing Will, saying it, without Reluctancy, *The Will of the Lord be done.* — He that acts from an Honest Principle of Respect to God, and sincerely desires to stand right in his Favour, cannot but be in some measure adorn'd with that meek and quiet Spirit, which he knows to be in the sight of God of great price.

Such as these are softning Principles, and as many as walk according to these Rules, Peace shall be upon them, and Mercy, and no doubt it shall be upon the Israel of God.

## SECT. V.

### *Some Rules of Direction.*

The Laws of our Holy Religion are so far from clashing and interfering, that one Christian Duty doth very much further and promote another; the Fruits of the Spirit, are like Links in a Chain, one draws on another; it is so in this; many other Graces contribute to the Ornament of a Meek and Quiet Spirit.

You see how desirable the Attainment is, will you therefore, through desire, separate yourselves to the pursuit of it, and seek and intermeddle with all Wisdom, *Pro. 18. 1.* and all little enough, that you may reach to the Meekness of Wisdom.

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1. *Sit loose to the World, and to every thing in it.* The more the World is crucified to us, the more our corrupt Passions will be crucified in us. If we would keep calm and quiet, we must by Faith live above the *stormy Region*. It is certain, those that have any thing, or have any thing to do in the World, cannot but meet with that every day from those with whom they deal, which will cross and provoke them; and if the Affections be set upon these things, and we be fill'd with a prevailing Concern about them, as the *principal* Things, those Crosses must needs pierce to the quick, and enflame the Soul, and that which toucheth us in these things, toucheth us in the *Apple of our Eye*. If the *Appetites* be carryed out inordinately towards those things that are pleasing to Sense, the Passions will be to the very same degree, carry'd out against those that are displeasing. And therefore (Christians) whatever you have of the World in your Hands, be it more or less, as you tender the Peace as well as the Purity of your Souls, keep it out of your Hearts, and evermore let out your Affections towards your Possessions, Enjoyments, and Delights in the World with a due Consideration of the Disappointment and Provocation, which probably you will meet with in them, and let that restrain and give check to their Inordinacy.

It is the excellent Advice of *Epictetus*, whatever we take a pleasure in, to consider the Nature of the thing, and to proportion our complacency accordingly: *Ἄνθρωπος σίγειν μὴ μωροῦ ἐν χρεῶν σίγειν, ἀλλ' ὡς αὐτὸς ἐν χρεῶν σίγειν.*  
 If thou art in love with a *China-Cup*, or a *Venice-Glass*



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*nice-Glass*, love it as a piece of brittle Ware, and then the breaking of it will be no great Offence, nor put thee into any disturbing Passion, for it is but what thou didst expect. Those that Idolize any thing in this World, will be greatly discomposed, if they be cross'd in it. The Money which *Micha's* Mother had, was her God, (it is *Bishop Hall's* Note) before it had the shape either of a Graven or a Molten Image, else the loss of it would not have set her a cursing, as it seems it did, *Judg.* 17. 2. Those that are greedy of Gain, trouble their own Hearts, as well as their own Houses, *Pro.* 15. 27. They are a burthen to themselves, and a Terror to all about them. They that will be rich, that are resolved upon it, come what will, cannot but fall into these foolish and hurtful lusts, *1 Tim.* 6. 9. And those also that serve their own Bellies, that are pleased with nothing unless it be wound up to the height of Pleasure-ableness, that are like the tender and delicate Woman, that would not set so much as the Sole of her Foot to the Ground, for Tendernefs and Delicacy, are very open to that which is disquieting, and cannot, without a great Disturbance to themselves, bear a Disappointment: And therefore *Plutarch* (that great Moralist) prescribes it for the Preservation of our Meekness, "Not to be curious in Diet, or Cloaths, or Attendance; for (saith he) they who need but few things, are not liable to Anger, if they be disappointed of many."

*Ne quare  
molliane  
sibi contin-  
gant dura.  
Phurant.*

Would we but learn in these things to cross our selves, we should not be so apt to take it heinously if another crosseth us. And therefore the Method of the Lessons in Christ's School,

*A Discourse concerning Meekness.*

School, is first to *deny our selves*, and then to *take up our Cross*, Matth. 16. 24. We must also mortifie the desire of the *Applause* of Men, as altogether Impertinent to our True Happiness. If we have learnt not to value our selves by their *good word*, we shall not much disturb our selves for their *ill word*. St. Paul bore Reproaches with so much Meekness, because he did not build upon the Opinion of Man, reckoning it a small thing to be *judged of Man's day*, 1 Cor. 4. 3.

2. *Be often repenting of your sinful Passion, and renewing your Covenants against it.* If our rash Anger were more bitter to us in the *Reflection*, afterwards we should not be so apt to *Relapse* into it. Repentance in general, if it be sound and deep, and grounded in true Contrition and Humiliation, is very *weakening*, and disposeth the Soul to bear Injuries with abundance of Patience. Those that live a *Life of Repentance* (as we have every one of us reason to do) cannot but live a quiet Life; for no body can lightly say worse of the true Penitent, than he saith of himself. Call him a *Fool* (an Affront which many think deserves a Challenge) the humble Soul can bear it patiently with this thought, *Yea, a Fool I am*, and I have call'd myself so many a time, *more brutish than any Man*; I have not the Understanding of a Man, Prov. 30. 2. But Repentance doth, in a special manner, dispose us to Meekness, when it fastens upon any irregular inordinate Passion, with which we have been transported. *Godly Sorrow* for our former Transgressions in this matter, will work a *carefulness* in us, not again to Transgress. If others be causelessly or excessively angry with me,

me, am not I justly requited for the like or more indecent Passions. Charge it home therefore with Sorrow and Shame upon your Consciences, aggravating the Sin, and laying load upon your selves for it, and you will find that *the burnt Child, especially while the pain is smarting, will dread the Fire*; compare *Job 42.6.* with *ch. 40. 46.*

With our Repentance for our former unquietness, we must engage our selves by a firm Resolution, in the strength of the Grace of Jesus Christ to be more mild and gentle for the future. Say, *You will take heed to your ways that you offend not, as you have done, with your Tongue*; and be often remembering that you said so, as *David* doth, *Psalms 39. 1.* Resolution would do much towards the conquering of the most rugged Nature, and the quiet bearing of the greatest Provocation; it would belike the *Bit and Bridle to the Horse and Mule, that have no Understanding*. It may be of good use every Morning to renew a Charge upon our Affections, to *keep the Peace*, and having welcom'd Christ in Faith and Meditation, let no rude unruly Passion *stir up or awake our Love*.

3. *Keep out of the way of Provocation, and stand upon your Guard against it.* While we are so very apt to offend in this matter, we have need to pray (and to practise accordingly) *Lord, lead us not into Temptation.* — Those are Enemies to themselves and to their own Peace, as well as to humane Society, that seek occasion of Quarrel, that fish for Provo-

*Seneca. quàm regere, sed non admittere quàm admitti moderari.*

*Facile est excludere per-*

cations

*Non vis esse  
iracundus?  
ne sis curi-  
osus. Sen.*

cations and dig up Mischief; but meek and quiet People will on the contrary, studiously avoid even that which is justly provoking, and will see it as if they saw it not. Those that would not be angry, must wink at that which would stir up Anger, or put a favourable Construction upon it. The Advice of the Wise Man is very good to the purpose, *Eccles. 7. 21. Also take no heed to all Words that are spoken, lest thou hear thy Servant curse thee;* and 'tis better for thee not to hear it, unless thou couldst hear it patiently, and not be provoked to sin in the hearing of it. 'Tis a common Story of *Cory's*, that being presented with a Cupboard of curious Glasses, he return'd his Thanks to his Friend that sent them, and gratified the Messenger that brought them, and then deliberately broke them all, lest by the casual breaking of them severally, he should be provok'd to Passion. And *Dion* relates it, to the honour of *Julius Caesar*, that *Pompey's* Cabinet of Letters coming to his hand, he would not read them, because he was his Enemy, and he would be likely to find in them, that which would increase the Quarrel; and therefore (as *Dr. Reynold's* expresses it) he chose rather to make a Fire on his *Hearth*, than in his *Heart*; *De non existentibus & non apparen- tibus eadem est ratio*: Keep the Injury out of sight, and it will be out of mind.

But seeing *Briars and Thorns are with us*, and *we dwell among Scorpions* (so the Prophet, *Ezek. 2. 6.*) and it must needs be, that *Offences will come*, let us be so much the more careful, as we are when we go with a Candle among Barrels of Gunpowder, and exercise our selves to have Consciences void of Offence, not apt to offend others,

others, nor to resent the Offences of others. When we are at any time engaged in Business or Company, where we foresee Provocation, we must double our Watch, and be more than ordinary circumspect. *I will keep my Mouth with a Bridle,* (saith David) i. e. with a particular actual care and diligence, *while the Wicked is before me*, and frequent Acts will confirm the good *Disposition*, and bring it to a *Habit*. Plutarch adviseth, "To set some time to our selves" for special strictness: So many Days or Weeks "in which, whatever Provocations do occur, we will not suffer our selves to be disturbed by them. And thus he supposeth, by degrees, the Habit of vicious Anger, may be conquer'd and subdued. But after all, the *Grace of Faith* hath the surest influence upon the Establishment and Quietness of the Spirit: Faith acted upon the *Mercy of God*, the *Meekness of Christ*, the *Love of the Spirit*, the *Commands of the Word*, the *Promises of the Covenant*, and the *Peace and Quietness of the upper World*; this is the approved *Shield*, with which we may be able to *quench all the fiery Darts of the Wicked one*, and all his wicked Instruments.

4. *Learn to pause.* It is a good Rule, as in our Communion with God, so in our Converse with Men, Eccl. 5. 2. *Be not rash with thy Mouth, and let not thine Heart be hasty to utter any thing.* When we are at any time provok'd, Delays may be as *advantageous*, as in other cases they are dangerous. The discretion of a Man deferreth his Anger, nisi iratus Prov. 19. 11. *I would beat thee* \*, (saith Socrates to *essum*. Seneca makes it the Saying of Socrates; Amb. De Offic. and others ascribe it to *Anchysa Terentium*.)

*A Discourse concerning Meekness.*

his Servant) if I were not angry; but he that is hasty of Spirit, that joyns in with his Anger upon the first rise of it, *exalteth folly*, Pro. 14. 29. The Office of Reason is to govern the Passions, but then we must give it time to act, and not suffer the Tongue to over-run it: Some have advis'd, when we are provoked to anger, to take at least so much time to deliberate, as while we repeat the Alphabet; and others have thought it more proper to repeat the Lords Prayer, and perhaps by that time we are past the fifth Petition, [*Forgive us our Trespases, as we forgive them that Trespase against us*] we may be reduced into Temper. It is a good Rule, *To think twice before we speak once*; for he that hasteth with his Feet sinneth. It was the noted saying of a great Statesman in Q. Elizabeth's Court, *Take time and we shall have done the sooner*. Nor can there be any thing lost by deferring our Anger, for there is nothing said or done in our Wrath, but it might be better said and better done in Meekness.

*Potest parva  
dilatari exigi,  
non potest  
exacta re-  
vocari. Sen.  
de ira.*

5. Pray to God by his Spirit to work in you this excellent Grace of Meekness and Quietness of Spirit. It is a part of that Comeliness, which he puts upon the Soul, and he must be sought unto for it. If any Man lack this Meekness of Wisdom, let him ask it of God, who gives liberally, and doth not upbraid us with our Folly. When we begin at any time to be froward and unquiet, we must lift up a Prayer to him that stilleth the Noise of the Sea, for that Grace which establissheth the Heart. When David's Heart was hot within him, the first word that broke out was a Prayer, *Psa. 39. 3, 4*. When we are surprized by a Provocation, and begin to be in



in a ferment upon it, it will not only be a present Diverſion, but a Sovereign Cure to lift up an Ejaculation to God for Grace and Strength to reſiſt and overcome the Temptation: Lord, keep me quiet now! Let your Requeſts in this matter, be made known to God; and the Peace of God ſhall keep your Hearts and Minds, Phil. 4. 6, 7. You are ready enough to complain of unquiet People about you; but you have more reaſon to complain of unquiet Paſſions within you; the other are but Thorns in the Hedge, theſe are Thorns in the Fleſh, againſt which, if you beſeech the Lord, as Paul did, 2 Cor. 12. 8. with Faith, and Fervency, and Conſtancy, you ſhall receive Grace ſufficient.

6. Be often examining your growth and proficiency in this Grace. Enquire what ground you have got of your Paſſion, and what Improve-<sup>Αρετα ἀπὸ τῶν μικρῶν ἐκχέεται τὸ ἐλαδίου, κλέπτειται, οὐδέν ἐστι, ἐπιλεγε, οὐ τὸ πᾶν, πᾶν ἔστι, ἀπὸ θανάτου τὸ πᾶν ἔστι.</sup> ments you have made in Meekneſs. Provocations recur every day, ſuch as have been wont perhaps to put you into a Paſſion, theſe give you an opportunity to make the Trial. Do you find that you are leſs ſubject to Anger, and when angry, that you are leſs tranſported by it than formerly, that your apprehenſion of Injuries is leſs quick, and your Reſentments leſs keen than uſual? Is the little Kindom of your Mind more quiet than<sup>αἰετῶς.</sup> it hath been, and the diſcontented Party weakned<sup>Εφ. 1. 12,</sup> and kept under? 'Tis well if it be ſo, and a good ſign that the Soul prospereth, and is in Health. We ſhould examine every Night, whether we have been quiet all Day? we ſhall ſleep the better if we find we have. Let Conſcience keep up a Grand Inqueſt in the Soul, under a Charge from the Judge of Heaven and Earth, to enquire, and due preſentment make of all Riots,

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*Routs, and Breaches of the Peace*, and let nothing be left unpresented for Favour, Affection or Self-love; nor let any thing presented, be left unprosecuted according to Law. Those whose natural Temper, or their Age, or Distemper leads them to be hot, and hasty, and unquiet, have an opportunity by their Meekness and Gentleness to discover both the Truth and Strength of Grace in general; for it is the surest mark of Uprightness to keep our selves from our own Iniquity, Psal. 18. 23. And yet if the Children of God bring forth these Fruits of the Spirit in old Age, when commonly Men are most froward and peevish, it shews not only, that they are upright, but rather *that the Lord is upright*, in whose strength they stand, that he *is their Rock*, in whom they have cast Anchor, and there is *no unrighteousness in him*, Psal. 92. 14, 15.

7. *Delight in the Company of meek and quiet Persons.* Solomon prescribes it as a preservative against foolish Passion, *to make no Friendship with an angry Man, lest thou learn his way*, Prov. 22. 24, 25. When thy Neighbours Heart is on fire, it's time to look to thy own. But Man is a sociable Creature, and cut out for Converse; let us therefore, since we must have some Company, chuse to have Fellowship with those that are meek and quiet, that we may learn their way, *for it is a good way*. The Wolf is no Companion for the Lamb, nor the Leopard for the Kid, till they have forgot to hurt and destroy. Company is assimilating, and we are apt insensibly to grow like those with whom we ordinarily converse, especially with whom we delight to converse, therefore let the quiet in the Land, be the Men of our choice, especially into standing Relations  
and

and *Bosom-friendship*. Observe in others, how sweet and amiable *Meekness* is, and what a Heaven upon Earth those enjoy that have the command of their own Passions; and study to transcribe such Copies. — There are those that take a pleasure in huffing and hectoring Company, and are never well but when they are in the midst of Noise and Clamour; sure Heaven would not be Heaven to such, for that is a calm and quiet Region; no noise there but what is Sweet and Harmonious.

8. *Study the Cross of our Lord Jesus.* — Did we but know more of Jesus Christ, and him crucified, we should experience more of the *Fellowship of his Sufferings*. Think often how, and in what manner he suffered; see him led as a Lamb to the Slaughter, and arm your selves with the same *Mind*. Think also why, and for what end he suffered, that you may not in any thing contradict the design of your dying Saviour, nor receive his Grace in vain. Christ died as the great Peace-maker, to take down all *Partition-Walls*, to quench all threatening *Flames*, and to reconcile his Followers, not only to God, but one to another, by the *slaying of all Enmities*, Eph. 2. 14, 16. The Apostle often prescribes a believing regard to the sufferings of Christ, as a powerful allay to all sinful and intemperate Heats, as Eph. 5. 2. Phil. 2. 5, &c. Those that would shew forth the meek and humble Life of Christ, in their mortal Bodies, must bear about with them continually the dying of the Lord Jesus, 2 Cor. 4. 10. The Ordinance of the Lord's Supper, in which we shew forth the Lord's Death, and the New-Testament, in his Blood, must therefore be improved by

by us for this blessed end, as a *Love-feast*, at which all our sinful Passions must be laid aside, and a *Marriage-feast*, where the *Ornament of a meek and quiet Spirit* is a considerable part of the *Wedding-Garment*. The forgiving of Injuries, and a Reconciliation to our Brother is both a necessary Branch of our Preparation for that Ordinance, and a good evidence and instance of our profiting by it. If God hath there spoken Peace to us, let not us go away and speak War to our Brethren. The *Year of Release* under the Law, which put an end to all Actions, Suits and Quarrels, begun in the close of the *day of Atonement*; then the *Jubilee-Trumpet* sounded.

9. *Converse much in your Thoughts with the dark and silent Grave.* You meet with many things now that disturb and disquiet you, and much ado you have to bear them; think how quiet Death will make you, and how incapable of resenting or resisting Injuries, and what an easie prey this Flesh you are so jealous for, will shortly be to the *Worm*, that shall feed sweetly on it. You will e're long be out of the reach of Provocation, there where the wicked cease from troubling, and where their Envy and their Hatred is for ever *perished*. And is not a quiet Spirit, the best Preparative for that quiet State? Think how all these things, which now disquiet us, will appear when we come to look Death in the Face; how small and inconsiderable they seem to one that is stepping into Eternity. Think, what need is there that I should so ill resent an Affront or Injury, that am but a Worm to day, and, may be Worms Meat to morrow. They say, *when Bees fight, the throwing up of Dust among them, quickly parts the Fray.*

## A Discourse concerning Meekness.

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*Hi motus animorum atq; hæc certamina tanta  
Pulveris exigui jaltu compressa quiescunt.* Virg. Georg.  
lib. 4.

A little sprinkling of the Dust of the Grave, which we are upon the brink of, would do much towards the quieting of our Spirits, and the taking up of our Quarrels. Death will quiet us shortly, let Grace quiet us now. When David's Heart was hot within him, he prayed, Lord, make me to know my end, Psal. 39.3,4.

To conclude : I know no Errand that I can come upon of this kind to you, in which methinks I should be more likely to prevail, than in this, so much doth Meekness conduce to the Comfort and Repose of our own Souls, and the making of our Lives sweet and pleasant to us. *If thou be wise herein, thou shalt be wise for thy self.* That which I have been so intent upon in this Discourse, is only to perswade you not to be your own Tormentors, but to govern your Passions, so that they may not be *furiosæ* to your selves. The Ornament I have been recommending to you is confessedly excellent and lovely ; will you put it on, and wear it, that by this all Men may know that you are Christ's Disciples, and you may be found among the Sheep, on the right Hand, at the great day, when Christ's Angels shall gather out of his Kingdom every thing that offends. Every one will give Meekness a good Word, but in this, as in other instances ; *Probitus laudatur & alget.* Chrysostom argues excellently from the

and being meek : *Τὸ δουλόειν τὴν ὀργῆς ἀρῆναι, μὴ γὰρ μακρὰν ἀποδύμειν ἐν σάλαδι καὶ χεῖματι δαπανῆσαι ἀντὶ θελήσαι μένον, &c.* forgiving  
*Hom. 19. ad pop. Antioch.* This is one of Epictetus's τὰ ἐφ' ἡμῖν.

Love is commended by all, and yet the Love of many waxeth cold ; But let all that would not be self-condemned, practise what they praise. And

as there is nothing in which I should more expect to prevail, so there is nothing in which it will easier appear, whether I have prevailed or no; this Tree will soon be known by its Fruits: So many are the Passages of almost every day, which call for the exercise of this Grace, that our profiting therein will quickly appear to our selves, and to all with whom we converse. Our Meekness and Quietness is more obvious, and falls more directly under a Trial and Observation than our Love to God, and our Faith in Christ, and other Graces, the exercise whereof lies more immediately between God and our own Souls. Shall we therefore set our selves to manifest in all our *Coniuge* and Converse, that we have indeed gotten good by this plain Discourse; that our Relations and Neighbours, and all that we have Dealings with, may observe a Change in us for the better, and may take Knowledge of us that we have *been with Jesus*; and let not the Impressions hereof ever wear off, but living and dying, let us be found among the *Quiet in the Land*: We all wish to see quiet Families, and quiet Churches, and quiet Neighbourhoods, and quiet Nations, and it will be so if there be quiet Hearts, and not otherwise.

19 MH 67

FINIS.



by us for this blessed end, as a *Love-feast*, at which all our sinful Passions must be laid aside, and a *Marriage-feast*, where the *Ornament of a meek and quiet Spirit* is a considerable part of the *Wedding-Garment*. The forgiving of Injuries, and a Reconciliation to our Brother is both a necessary Branch of our Preparation for that Ordinance, and a good evidence and instance of our profiting by it. If God hath there spoken Peace to us, let not us go away and speak War to our Brethren. The *Year of Release* under the Law, which put an end to all Actions, Suits and Quarrels, begun in the close of the *day of Attonement*; then the *Jubilee-Trumpet* sounded.

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# A Discourse concerning Meekness.

191

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To conclude : I know no Errand that I can come upon of this kind to you, in which methinks I should be more likely to prevail, than in this ; so much doth Meekness conduce to the Comfort and Repose of our own Souls, and the making of our Lives sweet and pleasant to us. *If thou be wise herein, thou shalt be wise for thy self.* That which I have been so intent upon in this Discourse, is only to perswade you not to be your own Tormentors, but to govern your Passions, so that they may not be furious to your selves. The Ornament I have been recommending to you is confessedly excellent and lovely ; will you put it on, and wear it, that by this all Men may know that you are Christ's Disciples, and you may be found among the Sheep, on the right Hand, at the great day, when Christ's Angels shall gather out of his Kingdom every thing that offends. Every one will give Meekness a good Word, but in this, as in other instances ; *Probitus laudatur Et alger.* *Chrysostom argues excellently from the easiness of forgiving*  
and being meek : *Τὸ εὐκαλεῖσθαι τὴν ὀργὴν ἀρσέναι, μὴ γὰρ μακροῦ ἀποδυνάμει ἐστὶν εὐλαδεῖν καὶ χρημίσσειν ἀπανήσας ἀκούει θελήσας μίσην, &c.*  
*Rom. 19. ad pop. Antioch.* This is one of *Epictetus's* τὰ ἐπ' ἡμῶν.

Love is commended by all, and yet the Love of many waxeth cold ; But let all that would not be self-condemned, practise what they praise. And

as

as there is nothing in which I should more expect to prevail, so there is nothing in which it will easier appear, whether I have prevailed or no; this Tree will soon be known by its Fruits : So many are the Passages of almost every day, which call for the exercise of this Grace, that our profiting therein will quickly appear to our selves, and to all with whom we converse. Our Meekness and Quietness is more obvious, and falls more directly under a Trial and Observation than our Love to God, and our Faith in Christ, and other Graces, the exercise whereof lies more immediately between God and our own Souls. Shall we therefore set our selves to manifest in all our Courage and Converse, that we have indeed gotten good by this plain Discourse; that our Relations and Neighbours, and all that we have Dealings with, may observe a Change in us for the better, and may take Knowledge of us that we have *been with Jesus*; and let not the Impressions hereof ever wear off, but living and dying, let us be found among the *Quiet in the Land*: We all wish to see quiet Families, and quiet Churches, and quiet Neighbourhoods, and quiet Nations, and it will be so if there be quiet Hearts, and not otherwise.

FINIS.

A  
S E R M O N

On Acts xxviii. 22.

Shewing, That the

C H R I S T I A N R E L I G I O N

Is not a

S E C T.

And yet that it is

*Every where Spoken against.*

By MATTHEW HENRY,  
Minister of the Gospel.

L O N D O N :

Printed for, and Sold by, Thomas Parkhurst,  
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M D C X C I X.

Sect  
Airesis or  
Heresy

Nature of Sects 5

---

## Christianity no Sect to be spoken against.

---

ACTS 28. 22.

-----For as concerning this Sect,  
we know that every where it is  
spoken against.

**W**OULD you think that such a spite-  
ful scornful Word as this should  
ever be said of the *Christian Religion*?  
That *pure Religion and undefiled*, *Jam. 1.*  
which came into the World supported by the *27.*  
strongest Evidences of *Truth*, and recommended  
by the most endearing Allurements of *Grace and*  
*Goodness*: The sayings whereof are so faithful, *1 Tim. 2.*  
and so well worthy of all acceptance: That Sa- *15.*  
cred Institution which scatters the brightest  
Rays of *Divine Light and Love* that ever were  
darted from Heaven to Earth: That's it which  
is here so invidiously call'd a *Sect*, and is said to  
be every where spoken against.

It will be worth while to observe,

1. Who they were that said this, they were

B

the



## Christianity no Self

the chief of the Jews that were at Rome, ver. 17. The Jews were look'd upon (at least they look'd upon themselves) as a very knowing People; The Jews at Rome; a place of Learning and Enquiry, thought themselves more knowing than the other Jews; St. Paul in his Epistle to the Romans, chap. 17. 2. --- 20. takes notice of it: *Thou art called a Jew, and makest thy boast of God, and knowest his Will, --- and art confident that thou thyself art a Guide of the Blind, a Light of them which are in Darkness, &c.* And we have reason to suppose that the Chief of the Jews there who had the greatest Advantages of Education and Correspondence, were the most intelligent: It might also be justly expected that upon the first notices of the Gospel, the Jews should have been of all People most ready to acquaint themselves with a Religion which was so much the Honour and Perfection of their own: And yet it seems, the Jews, the chief of the Jews at Rome knew no more of Christianity but this, that it was a Self every where spoken against. This we know, (said they) and it was all they knew concerning it.

1. Thes. 2.  
15, 16.

† Tertul-  
lian confi-  
dently as-  
serts Pri-  
mum Ne-  
ronem in  
hanc Sec-  
tam tum  
maxime  
Romæ o-  
rientem,  
Cæsariano  
gladio  
terocisse.

Apol. cap. 5

The Jews were of all other the most bitter and inveterate Enemies to the Christians; while the Roman Emperors tolerated them, (as they did till Nero's time †) the Jews with an unwearied Malice persecuted them from City to City, and were the first Wheel in most of the Opposition that the Gospel met with, when it was first Preached: Now one would think they would not have been so vigorous and industrious to suppress Christianity if they had not very well acquainted themselves with it, and known it to deserve such opposition; But it seems by this, they knew little or nothing of the Religion they

they so much malign'd, and never search'd into the Merits of its Cause, nor weigh'd the Proofs of its Divine Authority, but against all Law and Reason condemn'd it (*de rariis*, as *Justin Martyr* complains) purely upon common Fame, and follow the cry to run it down, because it was *so* spoken against.

*Inquisitione Tag-nitione neglecta Nomen designetur Nomen expug-natur ----- Vox sola preadamnat*  
Text. Ap. c. 3.

2. Upon what occasion they said this. They were now appointing a time to discourse with St. Paul upon the great Question in debate, whether Jesus of Nazareth was the true Messiah or no. And they seem'd willing to hear what that great Man had to say in defence of the Religion he preach'd. *We desire* (say they) *to hear of thee what thou thinkest*. Now one would expect that so good a Cause, managed by such a skilful Advocate, would not but carry the day, and be Victorious, and that they would all have been brought over to the belief of Christianity; But we find v. 14. that it prov'd otherwise; after all, there were those that *believed not*, and the Text intimates the reason of their Infidelity, they came to hear the word under a Prejudice; They had already imbib'd an ill opinion of the way, which right or wrong they resolv'd to hold fast; And tho' some of them by the help of Divine Grace got over this stumbling Block, that like the Bereans were more Noble than the rest, and of freer thought: yet many of them continued under the power of those Prejudices, and were seal'd up under Unbelief, v. 26. 27. Thus is the Power of the Word in many, baffled by the Power of Prejudice. They do not believe, because they are resolv'd they will not: They conclude that no good thing can come out of John 1. Nazareth, and will not be perswaded to come and 46.

B 2

see:

Prov. 18. *see* : Thus do they prejudge the Cause, answering  
 13. the matter before they hear it, and it will prove  
 John 7. folly and shame to them.  
 41.

Now in the Account they here give of their Knowledge of the Christian Religion, we may observe,

1. That they look'd upon it to be a *Sect*, and we'll prove that to be *false*.

2. ---- A *Sect* every where spoken against, and we will grant that to be *true*, that it is generally spoken against, tho' tis most unreasonable and unjust it should be so.

*Answers  
 on  
 Every*

First, The Christian Religion is here called (but miscalled) a *Sect*, *separatus*, a *Heresy*. After *2. Tim. 2.* the way which they call *Heresy*, (saith St. Paul, *1. Cor. 11.* An O- Acts 24. 14.) so worship I the God of my Fathers, *pinion not* ---- The *Sect* of the Nazarenes, so Tertullus calls *forced up* it in his opening of the Indictment against Paul, *on us by* Acts 24. 5. it's call'd *this way*, Acts 9. 2. and *the Evi-* dences of *that way*, Acts 19. 9. as if it were a *By-path* out of the common Road. The Practice of serious Godliness is still look'd upon by many as a *Sect* that is a Party-business, and a piece of affected singularity in Opinion and Practice tending to promote some carnal *Design*, by creating and supporting invidious *Distinctions* among Men. This is the proper notion of a *Sect*, and therefore the Masters and Maintainers of Sects are justly in an *ill Name*, as Enemies to the great Corporation of *Mankind*; but there is not the least colour of Reason to put this invidious and scandalous Character upon the Christian Religion. However, it may be mistaken and misrepresented, it is very far from being really a *Sect*. There were Sects of Religion among the Jews;

To be spoken against.

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Jews; we read of the *Sect of the Sadducees*, Acts 5. 17. which was built upon *peculiar notions*, such as overturn'd the foundation of *Natural Religion*, by denying a future state of *Rewards and Punishments*: There was also the *Sect of the Pharisees*, Acts 15. 5. the *straitest Sect* of their Religion, Acts 26. 5. which was founded in the observance and imposition of *singular Rites and Customs*, with an affected *separation* from, and *contempt* of all Mankind: These were *Sects*: But there is nothing of the Spirit and Genius of these in the Christian Religion, as it was instituted by its great Author.

1. True Christianity establisheth that which is of *common* concernment to all Mankind, and therefore is not a *Sect*. The *Truths and Precepts* of the everlasting Gospel are perfective of and no way repugnant to the *Light and Law* of Natural Religion. Is that a *Sect* which gives such mighty Encouragements and Assistances to those that in every Nation fear God and work Righteousness? Acts 10. 34. Is that a *Sect* which tends to nothing else but to reduce the revolted Race of Mankind to their *Ancient Allegiance* to the great Creator, and to renew that *Image* of God upon Man which was his *Primitive Rectitude and Felicity*? Is that a *Sect* which proclaims God in Christ reconciling the World unto himself, and re- 2 Cor. 5.  
covering it from that degenerate and deplorable State into which it was sunk? Is that a *Sect* which publisheth Good-will towards Men, and Christ the Lamb of God taking away the Sins of the World? Surely that which concurs so much with the uncorrupted and unprejudiced Sentiments, 1 John 2.  
and conduceth much more to the true and real  
Happiness of all Mankind cannot be thought to

Luke 2.

14.

Joh. 1. 29.

3. 16.

1 John 2.

2.

take its rise from such narrow *Opinions*, and private *Interests*, as *Sects* owe their Original to.

*Secta dici-  
tur à Se-  
cundo.*

2. True Christianity hath a direct tendency to the *Uniting* of the Children of Men, and the *gathering* of them together in one, and therefore is far from being a *Sect*, which is suppos'd to lead to Division, and to sow Discord among Brethren. The Preaching of the Gospel did indeed prove the occasion of Contention. Our Saviour foresaw and foretold it would be so, *Luke* 12. 51, 52, 53. that his Disciples and Followers would be *Men of strife*, in the same sense that the Prophet was, *Jer.* 15. 10. not Men *striking*, but Men *striven with*; but the Gospel was by no means the Cause of this Contention, for it was intended to be the Cure of all Contention. If there be any who under the Cloak and Colour of the Christian Name *cause Divisions*, and propagate Feuds and Quarrels among Men, let them bear their own Burden; but it is certain that the Christian Religion as far as it obtains its just Power and Influence upon the minds of Men will make them Meek and Quiet, Humble and Peaceable, Loving and Useful, Condescending and Forgiving, and every way Easy, and Acceptable and Profitable one to another. Is that a *Sect* which was introduced with a Proclamation of *Peace on Earth*? That which bears Swords into Plow-shares, and Spears into Pruning-hooks? Or, was he the *Author* of a *Sect* who is the Great Creator of Unity, and who Died to break down partition Walls, and to slay all Enemies, that he might gather together in one the Children of God that were scattered abroad? Was he the Author of a *Sect* who came into the World not to destroy Mens Lives, but to save them, and who taught his

*Eph.* 2.  
14, 15, 16.  
*John* 11.  
52.

*Luk.* 9. 56.

his Followers not only to love one another, but to love their *Enemies*, and to count every one their *Neighbours*, that they could be any way *viceable* to? Luke 10. 36, 37.

3. True Christianity aims at no *Worldly Benefit* or *Advantage*, and therefore must by no means be call'd a *Self*. Those that espouse a *Self* are suppos'd to be govern'd in it by their secular Interest, and to aim at *Wealth*, or *Honour*, or the gratification of some *Vase Lust*. The *Pharisees* prov'd themselves to be a *Self* by their Thirst after the *praise of Men*, and their greedy *devouring of Widows Houses*. But the Professors of Christianity have not only been taught by the Law of their Religion, to live above this *World*, and to look upon it with a *Holy Contempt*, but have been expos'd by their Profession to the *Loss* and *Ruine* of all their secular *Comforts* and *Enjoyments*. Are those to be accounted *politick* and *deserving* *Seculars* that have for Christ chearfully *suffered the loss of all things*? Is Phil. 2. 8. that a *Self* which instead of preferring a *Man* to *Honour*, or raising him an *Estate*, lays him open to *Disgrace* and *Poverty*, renders him obnoxious to *Fines* and *Forfeitures*, *Banishments* and *Imprisonments*, *Racks* and *Tortures*, *Flames* and *Gibbets*, which were the common Lot of the *Primitive Christians*? *Cesar Vannus* a sworn *Enemy* to the *Christian Religion*, and one who was industrious in searching out *Objections* against it, own'd he could find nothing in it that favour'd of a *Carnal* and *Worldly Design*; No, it hath always approv'd it self a *Heavenly Calling*, and the strictest Professors of it (even their *Enemies* themselves being Judges) have had their *Conversation in the World in Simplicity*, and *Godly* 2 Cor. 1. 12.



*Christianity no Sect*

*Sincerity, not with Fleeshly Wisdom.* Very unjustly therefore it is called a *Sect*.

As to this therefore, suffer a Word of *Cauti-on* and *Exhortation*.

1. Let us take heed lest our Profession of Religion degenerate into any thing which may make it look like a *Sect*. *Christianity* as it was instituted by Christ is not a *Sect*, let not *Christians* then be *Sectaries*. We make our Profession of Religion a *Sect* when we monopolize the Church and its Ministry and Sacraments, and spend that zeal in matters of *doubtful Disputation* which should be reserved for the *weightier matters of the Law*. When we place our Religion in
- Rom. 14. *Meats and Drinks*, which should be placed in  
17, 18. *Righteousness, and Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghost*. When we profess Religion with a *Conceit* of our selves, and a *Contempt* of others, and with any *Worldly secular Design*; when we sacrifice the common Interests of Christ's Kingdom to the particular Interests of a Party, and in a word, when our Profession is tainted with
- Luke 12. the *Leaven of the Pharisees*, which is both *souring*  
1. and *swelling*, then it degenerates into a *Sect*. Let us therefore adhere to the *sure and large Foundations*, and be acted by a Principle of Love to,
- 1 Cor. 1. 2 and so maintain Communion with *all that in every place*, and under every Denomination, call on the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours. Let us be Modest in our Opinions, Charitable and Candid in our Censures, Self-denying in all our Converse, Acting always under the Influence of that *Wisdom that is from above*,
- Jam. 3. 17. which is *first Pure, then Peaceable, gentle and easy to be intreated, full of Mercy and good Fruits, without Partiality and Hypocrisy*, that by this well-do-

ing

ing we may put to silence the Ignorance of those who call Religion a *Sett*. 1 Pet. 2. 15.

2. Let us not be deterr'd from *serious Godliness*, or any of the *Instances* of it, by the invidious Name of a *Sett*, which is put upon it. If a *strict* and sober and circumspect *Conversation*, a conscientious Government of our *Tongue*, *Praying* and singing *Psalms* in our *Families*, a religious Observation of the *Lord's Day*, a diligent Attendance upon the *Means of Grace*, joyning in religious *Societies* for Prayer and Christian Conference, and endeavouring in our places the *Suppression* of Profaneness and Immorality, if these and the like be call'd and counted the Marks and Badges of a *Sett*, let us not be moved at it, but say as *David* did, 2 Sam. 6. 22. *If this be to be vile, I will be yet more vile.* If the Practice of Piety be branded as a *Sett*, it is better for us to come under the reproaches of Men for following it, than under the Curse of God for neglecting it. It is a *very small thing* to be judged of *Man's Day*, but he that judgeth us is the Lord: Let us therefore be more afraid of being *Settaries*, than of being call'd so. 1 Cor. 4. 3, 4.

*Secondly*, The Christian Religion is here said to be *every where spoken against*. That it was *spoken against* was evident enough, but that it was *every where* spoken against, was more than they could be sure of: They did not know *all Places*, nor had they correspondence with, or intelligence from *every Country*; but we must not wonder if those that oppose the *Truth* as it is in *Jesus*, make no conscience of transgressing the *Laws of Truth* in common Conversation. But we will suppose that the Acquaintance and Converse

verse of those Jews at Rome lay mostly with those that were Enemies to Christianity, and spoke against it, and they therefore concluded it every where spoken against because they found it spoken against in all places that they came to, or had advice from. Thus apt are we to embrace that as a general Sentiment and Observation which we find received by those that we usually associate with, and so we run our selves into mistakes, which larger and more impartial Enquiries would soon rectify.

- But we will take it for granted, however, that what they said was true, not because they said it, but because the experience of all Ages doth confirm it, and concur with it: So that a little Acquaintance with Books and the World will prove the Observation which we ground upon this Text;

Doct.

That it is, and always hath been, the Lot of Christ's Holy Religion, to be every where spoken against. Or thus :

That true Christianity hath all along met with a great deal of Opposition and Contradiction in this World.

I purpose not to enter into a particular Disquisition of that which has been, and is spoken against Religion, nor do I undertake at present to shew how false and unreasonable it is, That hath been done many a time by the best Hands, and so effectually that every impartial eye must needs look upon the cause of the Adversaries of Religion to be a baffled Cause: But I shall only make some improvement of this general Observation, which cannot be unreasonable in an Age wherein the Gates of Hell seem to be making their utmost efforts against the Church; and the Devil, as the Calumniator and False Accuser

cuse to be more wroth than ever with the Wo. Rev. 12.  
man the Church, and to push on the War with 17.  
an unusual vigor against the remnant of her Seed,  
which keep the Commandments of God, and have  
the Testimony of Jesus Christ.

I shall therefore (1.) enquire what it is in Chri-  
stianity that is spoken against. And (2.) show  
you why so Holy and Excellent a Religion is  
spoken against, and then draw some Inferences  
from this Observation.

For the first, Who and What it is that is spo-  
ken against.

1. Jesus Christ, the Author of our Religion, is  
every where spoken against: When the First be-  
gotten was brought into the World, old Savi-  
on, among other great things, pronounced this  
concerning him, that he was a sign which should  
be spoken against, and by that means was set for  
the fall of many, Luke 2. 34. when he was here  
upon Earth he was spoken against. The Stone, Psal. 118.  
which was design'd to be the Head of the Corner, 22.  
was rejected, and set at naught by the Builders.  
It was not the least of his Sufferings in the days  
of his flesh, that he endured the contradiction of  
Sinners against himself, Heb. 12. 3. They spoke  
against his Person as mean and contemptible, and  
one that had no form, nor continuance. They spoke  
against his Preaching as false and deceiving, Isa. 53. 2,  
John 7. 12. as factious and seditious, Luke 13. 2. as  
senseless and ridiculous, for the Pharisees derided  
him for it, Luke 16. 14. They spoke against his Mi-  
racles as done in Confederacy with Belzebub the  
Prince of the Devils, Mat. 12. 24. They spoke a-  
gainst his Morals, charging him with Blasphemy  
against God, Profanation of the Sabbath-day;  
and all the instances of Debauchery which were  
usually

usually met with in a *Gluttonous Man*, a *Wine-bibber*, and a *Friend of Publicans and Sinners*, Mat. 11. 19. They spoke against his Followers as a company of ignorant despicable People, John 7. 48. 49. When he was in his Sufferings, pass through all the steps and stages of them, and you will find him *every where* spoken against, They reproched him in all his Offices, In his Office of Teaching, when they challenged him to tell who smote him: In his Office of Saving, when they challenged him to *save himself* as he had *saved others*. In his Office of Ruling, when they challenged him to prove himself the *King of the Jews* by coming down from the Cross. The common People spoke against him, even they that passed by reviled him. The Pharisees & chief Priests, the *Grandeers* of the Church were as *severe* as any in their Reflections upon him, Princes also did sit and spake against him, Herod and his Men of War set him at nought, made nothing of him that made all things.

Nay, even now he is set down at the right-hand of the Majesty on high, far above all Principalities and Powers, i. e. both good and evil Angels, so as to be no more hurt by the contradictions of the one, than he is benefitted by the Adorations of the other, yet still he is spoken against. Besides the Contempt cast upon him by the Jews and Mahometans, are there not with us, even with us, those that daringly speak against him? *Arians* and *Socinians* are daily speaking against him as a *meer Man*, thinking that a Robbery in him, which He thought none, to be equal with God; *Quakers* and *Enthusiasts* speak against Him as a *meer Name*, setting up I know not what Christ within them, while they explode that Jesus that was Crucified at Jerusalem.

Atheists;

*Atheists and Deists speak against Him as a meer Cheat, accounting the Religion he established a great Imposture, and His Gospel a Jest. Profane and Ignorant People speak lightly of Him, as if our Beloved were no more than another Beloved; and some speak scornfully of Him, as Julian the Apostate did, that call'd Him in disdain the Galilean, and the Carpenter's Son. Such as these are the hard speeches, which ungodly Sinners have spoken against Him, the Lord rebuke them; even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke them.*

Cant. 5. 9.

Jude 15.

2. *God himself the great Object of our Religious Regards, is every where spoken against. It is not only the Christian Revelation that is thus attack'd by virulent and blasphemous Tongues, but even Natural Religion also. The Glorious and Blessed God the great Creator and Benefactor of the Universe, that doth Good to all, and whose tender Mercies are over all His Works, even He is every where spoken against. Some deny His Being: Tho' His Existence be so necessary, so evident, that if He be not, tis impossible any thing else should be, yet there are Fools who say in their hearts, what they dare not speak out, that there is no God, Psal. 14. 1. And he that saith there is no God wisheth there were none, and if he could help it there should be none. Others Blaspheme the Attributes of God, that charge the All-seeing Eye with Blindness, saying, The Lord shall not see, Psal. 94. 7. that charge the Eternal Mind with Forgetfulness, saying, God hath forgotten, Psal. 10. 11. that charge the Almighty Arm with Impotency, saying, Can God furnish a Table in the Wilderness, which is there call'd speaking against God, Psal. 78. 19,*

20.



20. Those speak of God that promise themselves immortality in so saying, They shall not  
 Gen. 3. 4. surely die, and God will not require it. And  
 Pl. 10. 13. those that boldly asseverate their Impiety and Irreligion, saying unto the Almighty, Depart from us ---  
 Job 21. 14, 15. Some speak proudly of God, tho' He is infinitely Great and Glorious, others speak hardly of Him, tho' he is infinitely Just and Good. The Name of God is spoken against by the profane using of it; so it is construed Psal. 139. 20. They speak against thee wickedly, thine Enemies take thy Name in vain. Can there be a greater slight put upon the Eternal God than for Men to use his Sacred and Blessed Name as a By-word, with which they give vent to their exorbitant Passions, or fill up the vacancies of their other Idle-words? The Name of God is thus abus'd not only by those that hearken out bloody Oaths and Curses which make the Ears of every good Man to tingle, but by those that mention the Name of God slightly and irreverently, in their common Conversation; in whose mouths he is near when he is far from their reins: To use those forms of speech which properly signify an Acknowledgment and Adoration of God's Being, as O God, or O Lord, or an Appeal to his Omniscience, as God knows, or an Invocation of his Favour, as God bless me, or God be merciful to me; I say, to use these or the like expressions impudently, and intending thereby to express only our wonder, our surprise, or our passionate resentments, or any thing than that which is their proper and awful signification, is an evidence of a vain mind, that wants a due regard to  
 Jer. 12. 2. that glorious and fearful Name, The Lord our God.  
 Deut. 28. 58. I see not that the Profanation of the Ordinance  
 of

of *Praying*, is any better than the Profanation of the Ordinance of *Swearing*. The serious consideration of this, I hope, might prevent much of that Dishonour which is done to God, and to his Holy Name, by some that run not with others to an excess of Riot.

The *Precedence* of God is likewise every where spoken against by *Murmurers* and *Complainers* Jude 16. that quarrel with it, and find fault with the dispensals of it, and when they are *hardly beset* Isa. 8. 21. *curse their King and their God*. Thus is the mouth of the ungodly set against the *Heavens*, and Psal. 73. 9. *their Tongue walketh through the Earth*.

The Word of God the great Rule of our Religion is every where spoken against, so it was when it was first preached, wherever the Apostles went preaching the Doctrine of Christ they met with those that *spoke against it, contradicting and blaspheming*, Acts 13. 45. So it is, now it is written, *Atheists* speak against the Scriptures as not of Authority, *Papists* speak against it as dark and uncertain further than it is expounded, and supported by the Authority of their Church, which \* receives unwritten Traditions *patrie* \* *Trident* *tatis affectu ac reverentia*, with the same pious af- *Concil.* *Sess. 4th.* fection and reverence that they receive the Scripture, nay, and if we may judge by their practice, with much more. Thus is the Word of God blasphemed by them who call themselves the *Temple of the Lord*. But if we take away *Revelation* (as the *Deists* do) all Religion will soon be lost, and if we derogate from the *Scriptures* (as the *Papists* do) all Revelation is much endangered.

Those also speak against the Scriptures, who profanely *Jest* with them, and that they may  
the

the more securely Rebel against *Scripture Laws*, make themselves and their idle Companions merry with the *Scripture Language*. *The Word of the Lord is unto them a reproach*, as the Prophet complains, *Jer. 6. 10.* And another Prophet found it so, whose serious word of the necessity of *Precept upon Precept* was turned into an idle Song, (as *Grotius* understands it) *Isa. 28. 13.* *The word of the Lord was unto them Precept upon Precept*—

Very likely it was done by the *Drunkards of Ephraim*, spoken of *v. 1.* and it gave occasion to that Caution, *v. 22.* *Be ye not mockers lest your Bands be made strong.* Profligate and Debauched Minds relish no wit like that which ridicules the Sacred Text, and exposeth that to

*Pf. 137. 3.* Contempt: As of old the insulting *Babylonians* must be *humour'd* with the *Songs of Sion*; and no

*Dan. 5.* *2, 3.* Cups can please *Belshazzar* in his drunken Frolick but the Sacred *Vessels of the Temple*. Thus industrious are the Powers of Darkness to *vilify* the Scriptures, and to make them contemptible; but he that sits in Heaven shall laugh at them, for in spite of all the little efforts of their impotent Malice, *He will magnifie the Law and make it honourable*, according to the word which he hath spoken, *Isa. 42. 21.*

4. The People of God, the Professors of this Religion are every where spoken against. Not only those of some particular Perswasion or Denomination, but (without regard to that) such as have been zealous in fearing God, and working Righteousness have been, in many places, very much spoken against. Our Blessed Saviour hath told his Disciples what Treatment of this kind they must expect, that they should be *revil'd* and have all manner of evil said against them falsely,

ly, *Mat. 5. 11, 12.* that they and their *NAMES* should be cast out as evil, *Luke 6. 22.* And if they called our *Master*, *Belzebub*, no nick-names fastned upon his Followers can seem strange. *Mat. 5. 25.* Mocking was an old way of persecuting the Covenant-Seed, for thus, *He that was after the Flesh*, betimes persecuted them that were after the Spirit. Compare *Gen. 21. 9.* with *Gal. 4. 29.* God's *Heritage* hath always been as a speckled Bird, that all the Birds are against, *Jer. 12. 9.* And his Children for signs and for wonders in *Zach. 3. 8.* *Israel*, that every one hath a saying to. *Isa. 8. 18.* Even *Widows* Children have been call'd and counted *Fools*, and their life *Madness*; The *Quiet in the Land* represented as *Enemies* to the Publick Peace; And those who are the greatest Blessings of the Age branded as the *Troublers of Israel*. The *Primitive* Christians were painted out to the World under the blackest and most odious Characters that could be, as Men of the most *profligate* Lives and Consciences, and that even placed their Religion in the grossest Impieties and Immoralities imaginable. Their Enemies found it necessary for the support of the Kingdom of the Devil, the Father of Lies and Slanders, (*fortiter Calumniari*) to Characterize them as the worst of Men, to whom they were resolv'd to give the worst and most barbarous Treatment. It had not been possible to have baited them, if they had not first dress'd them up in the skins of *wild Beasts*. And as then, so ever since, more or less in all Ages of the Church, Reproach hath been entail'd upon the most serious and zealous Professors of Religion and Godliness.

See this at large, represented by *Cacilius in Minucius Felix.*

## Christianity no Sect

1. The Ministers of Christ, the Preachers of  
 this Religion, are with a distinguishing Enmity  
 every where spoken against. Under the Old Te-  
 stament God's Messengers and his Propbets were  
 generally mocked and misused, and it was Jerusa-  
 lem's measure-filling Sin. 2 Chron. 36. 16. 'Twas  
 one of the Devices they devis'd against Jeremiah  
 to smite him with the tongue, because they would  
 not, and they desired that others might not give  
 heed to any of his words, Jer. 18. 18. Those to  
 whom the Prophet Ezekiel was a very lovely Song,  
 and with their mouths stowed much love to him, yet  
 were still talking against him by the Walls, and in  
 the Doors of their Houses, and God lets him know  
 it. Ezek. 33. 30, 31, 32. And then it is not  
 strange if the Ministers of the New Testament  
 (in which Truth shines with a stronger Light)  
 be with no less Enmity spoken against by those  
 that love Darknes rather than Light. The Apo-  
 stles, those prime Ministers of State in Christ's  
 Kingdom were so loaded with Reproach, that  
 they were made a spectacle to the World, a specta-  
 cle of Pity to those that have either Grace or  
 good Nature, but a spectacle of scorn to those  
 that had neither. They were trampled upon as  
 the Filth of the World; and whereas the Off-scou-  
 ring of any thing is bad enough, they were  
 look'd upon as the off-scouring of all things; even  
 unto this day; after they had in so many instan-  
 ces approv'd themselves well, and could not but  
 be made manifest in the Consciences of their worst  
 Enemies, 1 Cor. 4. 9, 13. And it hath all along  
 been the Policy of the Churches Enemies by all  
 marks possible to bring the Ministry into con-  
 tempt, and to represent the Churches Nazarites,  
 even those that were purer than Snow, whiter than  
 Milk.

Milk, and more ruddy than Rabies, with a visage blacker than a Coal, so that they have not been known in the streets. I allude to that complaint, Lam. 4. 7, 8. Marvel not, if the Standard-bearers be most struck at.

6. The Christian Religion it self hath been and still is every where spoken against. The Truths of it contradicted as false and groundless, the great Doctrines of the Mediation of Christ, and the Resurrection of the Dead were ridicul'd by the Athenian Philosophers, Acts 19. 18, 32. The Laws of it faulted as grievous and unreasonable, as hard sayings, which could not be born, by those who bid open defiance to the Obligation of them, and say, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their Cords from us, Pl. 2. 3. The Ordinances of it despis'd as mean, and having no form nor comeliness. Sabbath mock'd at, as of old, Lam. 1. 7. and the sanctification of them represented as only a Cloak for Idleness. Sacraments reproach'd, and the Sacred Memorial of Christ's Death and Sufferings, by the Persecutors of the Primitive Christians represented to the World as the bloody and inhumane Killing and Eating of a Child, and their Love Feasts and Holy Kifs (which were then in use) as only introductions to the most abominable uncleanness. Primitive Christianity was industriously put into an ill-name: it was call'd emphatically The Atheism, because it overthrew Idolatry, and undermin'd the false Gods, and worships that had so long obtain'd. This was the Out-cry at Ephesus, that if Paul's Doctrine took place, the Temple of the great Goddess would be despis'd, Acts 19. 26, 27. It was also branded as a Novelty, and an up-start Doctrine, because it took



1 Pet. 1. people off from that *vain Conversation* which  
 18. they had *received by Tradition from their Fathers.*  
 Acts 17. It was call'd at *Athens a New Doctrine*, and indu-  
 18, 19. striously represented in all places as a *Mushrome*  
 See Dr. *Self*, that was but of yesterday. It was look'd  
 Cave's upon as nearly allied to *Judaism*, because it was  
 Primitive so much supported by the Scriptures of the Old  
 Christia- Testament, and nothing was more despicable a-  
 nity, lib. mong the *Romans* than the *Jews*, and *their Reli-*  
 1. ch. 1. gion. The Professors of Christianity were look'd  
 upon as unlearned and ignorant Men, *Acts 4. 12.*  
 the very Dregs and Refuse of the People. *Ju-*  
 Greg. Na- *lian* forbade the calling of them *Christians*, and  
 zian. In- would have them called nothing but *Galileans*,  
 vectiv. in *thereby to expose them to the contempt of those*  
 Julian. O- *who are (as indeed most people are) govern'd*  
 rat. 1. p. more by a *sound of Words* than by the *reason of*  
 (mihi) 42. *Things.* Thus when the Devil was silenced in  
 his *Oracles* (as it is well known he was upon the  
 setting up of Christianity in the World) his  
 mouth was opened in *Lies and Slanders*; and  
 being forced to quit his pretensions to a *Deity*,  
 he appears bare-faced, as a *Devil*, (*Διάβολος*) a  
*False Accuser.*

The Reformed Religion in these latter ages,  
 hath been in like manner *spoken against*: Though  
 it *maintains all that*, [and only that] *Doctrine*,  
 which Christ and his Apostles preach'd, and was  
 before *Luther* there, where *Popery*, as such, ne-  
 ver was before or since, that is, in the Holy Scrip-  
 tures, yet the Professors and Preachers of it  
 have been call'd and counted *Hereticks*, and *Schis-*  
 matics, and by all possible Artifices expos'd to  
 the odium of the People, that *none might Buy or*  
 Sell, i. e. have the benefit and comfort of civil  
 Society and Commerce, that *had not the Mark*,

Lollards  
 from Loli-  
 um, Tares  
 so my Ld.  
 Cook from  
 Mr. Fox.  
 Rev. 13. 17

or

*To be spoken against.*

21

*or the Name of the Beast, or the Number of his Name.* Rev. 13. 17.

Nay, even among some that profess the Christian and Reformed Religion, yet the Practice of *serious Godliness* is very much spoken against. The Power of Religion is not only disliked and deny'd, but contradicted and condemned by those that rest in the *Form*. They that call the *Evil*, *Good*, will call the *Good*, *Evil*; and it is not strange if they, who abandon themselves to work all *uncleanness with greediness*, speak ill of such as *run not with them to the same excess of Riot*, where the *Wicked walk on every side, he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey*. The old Enmity between the Seed of the Woman and the Seed of the Serpent is still working, and the old Game every day plaid over again. The Truth as it is in *Jesus*, and the Truth which is according to *Godliness* will be contradicted by those that *lye in wait to deceive*. Bigots on all sides will have something to say against *Catholick Charity and Moderation*: They that are *servent in spirit, serving the Lord*, and forward to every good Work, must expect to be evil spoken of by such as affect a *Lukewarmness*, and *Indifferency in Religion*: Nor can those who walk *circumspectly, not as Fools but as Wise*, escape the lash of their Tongues who live at large, and walk loosely, and at all adventures, as the *Fools in Israel*.

Isa. 5. 20.

1 Pet. 4.

Ri- 3. 4.

Psal. 12. 8.

Isa. 59. 15.

Eph. 4. 21.

compar'd

with Tit.

1. 1.

I come now in the *Second Place* to enquire what's the *Reason* that so Holy and Excellent a Religion as Christianity is, meets with such hard usage, and is thus spoken against, every where spoken against: When we hear such an Out-cry as this made against Christianity, it is natural

*Christianity no Sect*

to us to enquire, as *Pilate* did when such a Clamour was raised against its Author, *Why, what evil hath it done?* Truly we may say concerning it as *Pilate* did concerning him, *We find no fault in it.* Which of all its Opposers convinceth it of Sin or Error? It invades no Man's Right, breaks in upon no Man's Property, is no Disturbance of the Peace, no Enemy to the Welfare of Families and Societies, is no Prejudice at all to the Interests of States and Princes, but to all these highly Beneficial and Advantageous: *Why then is it thus accused, condemned and spoken against?* We will endeavour to find out the true Reason of it, though it is impossible to assign a justifiable Reason of that which is most unreasonable.

I. The Adversaries of Religion speak against it *because they do not know it.* Sound Knowledge hath not a greater Enemy in the World than Ignorance. Our Lord Jesus was therefore despised and hated by the World, because the World *knew him not,* John 1. 10. If they had known the Dignity of his Person, the Excellency of his Doctrine, and the gracious Design and Purpose of his coming into the World, certainly they would not have Crucified the Lord of Glory, 1 Cor. 2. 8.

Acts 3. 15. They that did it, did it through Ignorance, and  
 17. knew not what they did. Thus they who say to the  
 Luke 23. Almighty, Depart from us, could not say so if  
 34. they did not at the same time studiously decline the knowledge of his ways. No Man will speak against Religion and the Power of it, that hath either seriously weighed the Proofs and Evidences of it, or impartially tried the Comfort and Benefit of it. If they knew this Gift, this inestimable Gift of God, instead of speaking against it, they

Job 21.  
 14.

John 4.  
 10.

they would covet it earnestly as the best Gift. He that looks at a distance upon Men Dancing, would think them to be mad: (It was *Peter Martyr's* Comparifon, in a Sermon which had fo good an influence upon the Conversion of the *Marquess of Vico*) But let him come nearer them, and obferve the Regularity and Harmony of all their Motions and Postures, and he will not only admire their Order, but find in *himself* an inclination to join with them: So he that contents himself with a distant and tranfient view of the Practice of Piety will perhaps take up hard thoughts of it, but a better Acquaintance will rectify the Miftake. When the Spoufe in the *Canticles* had given a Description of her Beloved to the Daughters of *Jerusalem*, the fame who before had scornfully ask'd, *What is thy Beloved* Cant. 5.9.  
*more than another Beloved?* Now as ferioufly en- 6. 1.  
quire, *Whither is thy Beloved gone, that we may seek him with thee?* The People of God are called his *Hidden Ones*, and their Life is a *Hidden Life*, their way *above*, and therefore it is that the World fpeaks evil of them, becaufe it *knows* Pfal. 83.3.  
*them not.* 1 *Joh.* 3. 1. They who *fpeak evil of* Col. 3.3.  
*these Dignities, fpeak evil of thofe things which they* Prov. 25.  
*know not,* as the Apoftle fpeaks *Jude* 8. 10. How 24.  
unjuft then, and unreafonable is the Enmity and Pfal. 105.  
Malice of the Adverfaries of Religion, to condemn that which they never enquired into, and *Quid iniquiusquam*  
to load that with the vileft *Reproaches* which for *ut oderim*  
ought they *know*, merits the higheft *Encomiums!* *homines*  
And how excellent then are the ways of God, *quod ignorant. Tunc*  
which none fpeak ill of but thofe that are unacquainted with them! while thofe that know them *enim me-*  
witness to the goodnefs of them, and *Wisdom* is *retur, quam-*  
*juftified of all her Children,* Mat. 11. 19. *docognofci-*  
*tur an me-*  
*reatur Terr.* Apol. cap.  
1.

C 4

2, They

*Ante nos  
incipiunt  
odisse quam  
nosse, ne  
cognitos  
aut imitari  
possint, aut  
damnare  
non possint*

Min. Fel.

P. (mihi)

30.

Rom. 8.7.

1 Joh. 3.

13.

Job 15.25.

Psa. 12.4.

Rev. 13.5, 6.

Rom. 3.13.

3. They

2. They speak against it because they do not like it, and we know *Ill-will never speaks well*. Tho' they have little acquaintance with Religion, yet they know this concerning it in general, that it is not agreeable with the way of their hearts which they are resolved to walk in, nor with the course of this World, which is the Card and Compass they steer by, and from which they take their measures; they know this, that it lays a restraint upon their Appetites and Passions, and consists much in the mortifying of their beloved Lusts and Corruptions, and therefore they have a secret *Antipathy* to it: The *Carnal Mind*, which is enmity against God, is so against all that bear the Image of God. Christ hath bidden his Disciples to expect the Hatred of the World, and not to marvel at it, *Job. 15. 18, &c.* They who bate to be themselves reform'd will never love those that are reform'd: Out of the abundance therefore of the Heart, and the Malignity that is there, it is no marvel if the mouth speak; where the Root of Bitterness is, it will bear Gall and Wormwood. The Daring Sinner that stretcheth out his hand against God finds his hand too short to reach him; but say they, with our Tongue will we prevail, our Lips are our own. The Beast that made War with Heaven in the Apocalyptick Vision, though he had ten Horns, and those crown'd, yet is not described doing mischief with them, but opening his Mouth in Blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his Name, and his Tabernacle, and them that dwell in Heaven, *Rev. 13. 5, 6.* The Poison of the Serpents Seed is under their Tongue, *Rom. 3. 13.*

3. They

3. They speak against Religion because it speaks against them. They who have fellowship with the unfruitful Works of *Darkness*, hate the Light which discovers them, *Joh. 3. 19.* Nor do any curse the Rising Sun but those that are scorch'd by it. Why were the *Pharisees* so exasperated against our Saviour but because he spake his Para- *Mat. 21.* bles against them, and laid them open in their own colours? Why did the *World* hate him who so loved the World, but because he testified of it that *John 7. 7.* its Works are evil? Why had *Joseph's* Brethren such a spleen against him, but because he was a Witness against them, and brought to his Father *Gen. 37. 2.* their evil Report? Why did *Abab* hate *Micajah*, *1 Ki. 22. 8.* and call *Elijah* his Enemy but because they were *21. 20.* the faithful Reprovers of his Wickedness, and never prophesied Good concerning him, but Evil? Why did the Inhabitants of the Earth rejoyce when the Witnesses were slain, but because those *Rev. 11.* two Prophets by their plain and powerful Preaching *10.* tormented them that dwell upon the Earth? The everlasting Gospel is a Testimony, either to us to *Mat. 24.* convince us, or against us to condemn us, and then no wonder if those speak against it who *14.* hate to be convinced by it, and dread to be con- *Naturale est & odif. se quem ti-* demned by it. The Prophet complains of those *mes, & quem me-* that laid Snares for him that reproveth in the gate; *tueris, in-* and why is it faithful Ministers are so much ha- *festare si* ted, but because their Business is to shew people *possis.* their Transgressions? If they would flatter Sinners *Min. Felix.* that flatter themselves in a sinful way, and cry *Isa. 29. 21.* Peace to them, to whom the God of Heaven *Isa. 58. 1.* doth not speak Peace, they might avoid a great deal of Reproach and Censure; but they dare not do it. They are not to make a new Law and *Gal. 1. 8.* Gospel, but to preach that which is made: they have



have their Rule in that Caution given to the Prophet, *Jer. 15. 19. Let them return unto thee, but return not thou unto them.* The Hearts and Lives of Men must be brought to comply with the Word of God, for the Word of God can never be made to comply with the Humours and Fancies of Men. Ministers as they would not for the World make the way to Heaven any straiter or narrower than Christ hath made it, so they dare not make it any broader or easier, nor offer Life and Salvation upon any other Terms than the Gospel hath already settled. If they aim at *pleasing Men*, they cannot approve themselves the *Servants of Christ*, and therefore are they so much spoken against. And the same is the Reason why the most strict and serious *Christians* are so much spoken against, because their Piety and Devotion, their Justice and Sobriety, their Zeal and Charity, is a standing Reproof to the wicked World, and condemns it, as the Faith and holy Fear of *Noah* condemned the Infidelity and Security of the Old World. The *Sodomites* were vexed at *Lot's* Conversation as much as he was at their filthy Conversation. Wherefore doth the *Blood-Thirsty* hate and revile the Upright, while the *Just* seek his Soul, but for the same Reason for which *Cain* hated *Abel*, because his own Works were Evil and his Brothers Righteous.

Now

Now for the APPLICATION of  
this DOCTRINE.

Let us see what good Use we may make of this Observation concerning the Wickedness of the Wicked in speaking so much against Religion and Godliness, and what is our Duty in reference hereunto.

First, Let us admire the *Patience and Forbearance of the God of Heaven*, in that he bears so much, and so long, with those that thus speak against Him and his Holy Religion. The Affront hereby given Him is very great, and (we would think) intollerable, even Hard Speeches that reflect upon an Infinite Majesty, have in them a kind of Infinite Malignity. He bears and knows all that which is said against Him, and against his Truth and VVays; and as a Jealous God resents it. He hath always Power in his Hands to punish the proudest of his Enemies, nor would their immediate Ruine be any Loss to him, and yet Sentence against these Evil Words and Works is not executed speedily: Be astonish'd O Heavens, Eccl. 8.11. at this, and wonder O Earth! that those wretches which rebel against the Beams of such Light and Glory, which spurn at the Bowels of such Love and Grace, are not immediately made the visible Monuments of Divine VVrath and Vengeance, and like, Sodom and Gomorrah, set forth for an Example! That the Blasphemers and Scoffers of these last Days are

- are not instantly struck *Dumb*, struck *Dead*. That He who hath so much said against him, yet doth himself *keep silence*, and doth not answer all these Reproaches and Contradictions (as he easily could) in Thunder and Lightning. Though his Silence and Forbearance is turn'd to his Reproach even by those that have the Benefit of it, who therefore think him *altogether such an one as themselves*, and take occasion from his *Patience* to question his *Faithfulness*, and challenge his *Justice*, saying, *Where is the Promise of his Coming?* Yet he bears, and his *Patience* is stretched out even to *Long-suffering*, because he is *not willing that any should perish*, nor that any means should be left untried to prevent their perishing. Therefore he bears with *Sinners*, because this is the *Day of his Patience*, and of *their Probation*. The *Wrath of God is reveal'd from Heaven* in the *Word of God*, that we might be aw'd by *Faith*, more than in present *Providences*, which would be an aw to *Sense*. But there is a *Day* coming, a dreadful *Day*, when our *God shall come*, and shall no longer *keep silence*, a *Day* foretold in the early Ages of the *VWorld*, by *Enoch the seventh from Adam*, when *Judgment* shall be executed upon ungodly *Sinners* for all their *hard Speeches*, which *Day* he will not anticipate, for *he knows it is coming*, Psal. 37. 13. It is agreeable to the regular course of *Justice*, that all *Judgments* be adjourn'd till the *Judgment-Day*, and all *Executions* defer'd till *Execution-Day*: And therefore now he condescends to *reason* with those that speak against him, for their *Conviction*, as he doth by the Prophet *Ezek. 18. 25*, &c. where he fairly debates the Case with those who said, *The way of the Lord is not equal*, That every Mouth may
- Pf. 50. 12.
- 2 Pet. 3. 3, 4.
- 2 Pet. 3. 9.
- Rom. 1. 18.
- Pfal. 50. 3.
- Jude 14. 15.

may be stopped with an unanswerable Argument before it be stop't with an irreverible Sentence, and those who have spoken against him may be sent *speechless* to Hell. He *keeps silence* now, because when he doth speak *he will be justified*. When our Lord Jesus was here upon Earth, with what an invincible Patience did he *endure the contradiction of Sinners*; when so many ill things were witnessed against him he was silent, to admiration, answered not a word to all their unjust Calumnies and Accusations, but at the same time he bound them over to the Judgment of the great Day by that awful word, *Mat. 26. 64. Hereafter ye shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of the Power,* and still he bears in expectation of that same Day. He doth not take Vengeance presently because he hath an Eternity before him for the doing of it. *Mat. 22. 12. Mat. 26. 63. Joh. 19. 9. Heb. 10. 13.*

And by the way, we may infer from hence, That those who would be like their Heavenly Father, must bear Reproach and Contradiction patiently. When any thing is said against us, reflecting never so little Disparagement upon us, or our Families, our Resentments of it are very sensible, and we are apt to take it hainously; nay, and to say we do well to be angry, for it is not a thing to be endur'd; not to be endur'd! O think how much God bears with the Contempt and Reproach cast upon his great Name, and that will surely qualify our Resentments of any indignity done to our little Names! Who are we that we must not be spoken against? Or what are our Sayings that they must not be contradicted? Such Affronts as these we should learn to bear as David did when Shimei cursed him, *So let him Curse*; and as the Son of David did *2 Sam. 16. 10. 4. 1 Pet. 2. 23.*

did when his Enemies reviled him, Blessing them that Curse us, and Praying for them that thus Persecute us, that we may be the Children of our Father which is in Heaven. God adjourns his Vindication to the great Day, and then surely we may adjourn ours to that day as St. Paul doth his, 1 Cor. 4. 5.

Secondly, Let us acknowledge the Power of Divine Grace, in keeping up the Christian Religion in the World, notwithstanding the universal Contradiction, and Opposition it hath met with. One would think that a way thus spoken against every where should have been long ere this lost and ruin'd, and the Christian Name cut off, to be no more in remembrance; which its Adversaries have so industriously endeavoured; if it had been of Men, it had certainly come to naught quickly, though they had let it alone, but being of God, it was to admiration Victorious over all opposition. A Sect, a Cheat could never have supported it self against so much Contradiction; no Human Power or Policy could have kept it up, nor any thing less than an Almighty Arm. The continuance of the Christian Religion in the world to this day is a standing Miracle for the Conviction of its Adversaries, and the Confirmation of the Faith of those that adhere to it. VVhen we consider what a mighty Force was raised by the Powers of Darkeness against Christianity when it was in its Infancy, how many they were that spoke against it, learned Men, great Men, Books were written, Laws were made against it; those that spoke for it, how few were they? and how mean and despicable! the foolish things of the VVorld, and the Weak, and yet we see the

Word

See this excellent-ly enlarged upon by the learned Grocius de v. R. C. l. 2.

Word of God mightily growing and prevailing, Acts 19.  
 Must we not needs say, *this is the Lord's doing, & it is marvellous in our eyes?* The several false Religions of the Heathen with their various Superstitions and Idolatries, though they gave very little Opposition one to another, but agreed together well enough, yet having no foundation in Truth they all wither'd away, and dwindled to nothing, and after the mighty sway they had born, and all means possible us'd to support 'em, at length their Day came to fall, their Oracles silenced, their Altars deserted, and the Gods themselves were *famished*, (*Zeph. 2. 11.*) and *perished from the Earth*, according to that Prediction, *Jer. 10. 11.* which is put into the mouths of the Captiv'd Jews, to retort upon their insulting Enemies, and for that purpose is originally in the *Caldee Dialect*: VVe may ask triumphantly, not only *where are the Gods of Humath and of Arpad?* *Where are the Gods of Sepharvaim* 2 Kin. 18: 34. *Hena, and Ivah*, those obscure and petty Deities? But where are the Gods of *Babylon and Egypt, Greece and Rome*, the illustrious names of *Saturn and Jupiter, Juno and Diana?* where are the Gods which our *British and Saxon* Ancestors worshipped before they received the Light of the glorious Gospel? Are they not all forgotten as dead Men out of mind, and their names written in the dust? But Christ's Holy Religion, though for some Ages it was utterly destitute of all Secular Supports and Advantages, and was assaulted on all hands by the most vigorous Attacks of its daring and most implacable Enemies, yet it hath strangely *weather'd its point*, and is in *being*, and, thanks be to God, in some places in a *flourishing* state to this day: Its  
 cause



- Exod. 3. cause an *opposed*, but never a *baffled* cause : Let  
3. 4. us turn aside now, and see this great sight, a  
Bush *burning* and yet *not consum'd*, and say, The  
Lord is in it of a Truth : *Come and see* the Cap-  
tain of our Salvation riding forth in the Chariot  
Rev. 6. 2. of the everlasting Gospel, with his *Crown* upon  
his Head, and his *Bow* in his Hand, *conquering*  
*and to conquer* --- That which was every where  
Afts 28. 3. spoken against Christianity, was like the *Viper*  
which fasten'd upon St. Paul's Hand, it gave  
people occasion to think very ill concerning it,  
and to look for its speedy fall, as the barbarous  
people concerning him whom they concluded to  
be a Murderer, and expected that he should  
have *swollen*, or *fallen down Dead*. But it hath in  
all Ages shaken those venomous Beasts into the  
Fire, and taken no harm, and so hath prov'd its  
own Divine Original. Let us herein acknow-  
ledge the *Wisdom* and *Power* of our Lord Jesus,  
Mat. 16. who hath so firmly built his Church upon a *Rock*  
18. that the *Gates of Hell*, i. e. all its Powers, and  
Policies, and Numbers could never *prevail against*  
*it*. *Mahomet*, though he industriously adapted  
his Religion, to the Sensual Appetites of Men,  
whose *Reason* only, and not their *Lusts*, could  
object against it, yet he obtain'd no strength, nor  
interest at all, till by a thousand Artifices he had  
got the Power of the Sword, and with it forbid  
any upon pain of Death to *speak against* him or  
his Doctrine; charging his first Followers, who  
were to propagate his Religion, if they met  
with any that objected against it, not to *dispute*  
with them, but to *kill* them immediately : By  
which means that grand Imposture in a little  
time got some footing in the world; and by the  
same Barbarous and Inhumane Methods, it hath  
been

See the  
learned  
Dr. Hum-  
frey Pri-  
deaux's ex-  
cellent Hi-  
story of  
the Life  
of Mabo-  
met lately  
published.

been supported now above a Thousand Years. And in like manner that great Enemy of the Church, represented in St. John's Vision, maintains his Interest by causing that *as many as would not worship the Image of the Beast should be killed*, Rev. 13. 15. Thus are Errors and false Religions propagated; strip them of their supports, & they fall to the ground of course; but on the contrary, the Christian Religion was planted and preserv'd not only without, but against secular Force, recommended and upheld by its own intrinsick Truth and Excellency, and that Divine Power which accompanied it. The Preachers and Professors of it every where spoken against, and yet every where getting ground, and strangely victorious, purely by the word of their Testimony, and by not losing their Lives unto the Death. Thus is come Salvation and Strength, and the Kingdom of our God, and the Power of his Christ.

Rev. 12.  
10, 11.

Thirdly, Let us greatly lament the Folly and Wickedness of those who speak against Christ and his Holy Religion, and if we can do any thing, have compassion upon them, and help to undeceive them, and rectify their Mistakes. Surely this is one of the Abominations committed among us, for which we should be found among those that sigh and cry. Ezek. 9. 4. one of those Instances of the Pride of Sinners for which our Souls should weep in secret, Jer. 13. 17. This is that Reproach of the solemn Assembly which is such a Burthen to all good Men. Zeph. 3. 18. Our Ears should tingle, and our Hearts tremble to hear the Reproach and Contempt cast upon Christ and his Religion, or to hear of it, and looking upon our selves as nearly concern'd in Sacred Things, we should be sensibly touch'd with the Profanation of them.

D

To

To affect us herewith, let us consider,

I. The great *Dishonour* hereby done to our God in the World. They that reflect upon his Truths and Ways, his Word and Ordinances, reflect upon him, He that *toucheth* these *toucheth the apple of his eye*; If therefore we have any love to God, or concern for his Honour, and have cordially espous'd the Interests of his Kingdom, what is an *Affront* to him, will surely be a *Grief* to us. It cannot but be a very melancholly Thought to every sensible Soul, That the God that *made* the World is *made* so *light* of in the World, That he who doth so much *Good* to the Children of Men, hath so little *Honour* from them, nay, and hath so much *Dishonour* done him by them every day, and his *Name* continually *blasphemed*. That the Lord Jesus, who so *loved* the *World*, is so much hated and despised by the World. The *Reproaches* of them who thus reproach our Master, if we be his faithful Servants we should feel as *falling upon us*. And if he take what is said and done against his People, as said and done against himself, much more reason have they to find themselves aggrieved in that which is said and done against him. If we pray heartily that God's *Name* may be *hallowed*, as we should do every day, we should grieve heartily that his *Name* is *dishonoured*, as we see it is every day. And our resentments of the Reproach cast upon God and Religion, we should make a humble and pious *Remonstrance* of before God in Prayer, as King Hezekiah spread Rabshakeh's blasphemous Letter *before the Lord*, with that tender and affectionate Request, *Lord bow down thine ear and hear: Open, Lord, thine eyes and see*, 2 Kin. 19. 16. How pathetically doth *Joshua* plead,

Isa. 52. 5.

Psa. 69. 10.

Mat. 25.

45.

plead, chap. 7. 9. *What wilt thou do unto thy great Name?* And with what a concern doth the Psalmist in the name of the Church insist upon this, *Psal. 74. 10. O God, how long shall the Adversary reproach? Shall the Enemy blaspheme thy Name for ever?* And *v. 18. Remember this that the Enemy hath reproached, O Lord, and that the foolish People have blasphemed thy Name.* And how earnestly doth he beg, *v. 22. Arise, O God, plead thine own Cause.* Thus should the Honour of God and Religion lie nearer our Hearts than any other concern whatsoever.

2. Consider the *miserable Condition* of those that presumptuously speak against God and Religion. Tho' they may do it with an Air of Assurance, as if they run no hazard, yet he that rolleth this Stone, it will certainly return upon him sooner or later. They that speak against Religion speak against their own Heads, and their own Tongues will at last fall upon them. We have reason to bewail their Madnes, and to pity, and pray for them, for they know not what they do. Miserable Souls! How will they be deceived at last, when they shall find that *God is not mocked!* And that while they were studying to put contempt on Religion, they were but preparing eternal Shame and Confusion for themselves! The Lord is a jealous God, and will not hold them guiltless that thus profane his Name: Their *Wit*, and *Learning*, and *Figure* in the World, may embolden them in their Sin, and bear them up a while in an open Defiance of all that's Sacred, but nothing can prevent their utter Ruine besides a serious and sincere *Repentance*, which is an *unsaying*, with Shame and Self-lothing, of all that which they have proudly spoken against God

Psa. 64. 8.

Gal. 6. 7.

and Godliness. They that pervert the right  
 Hof. 14.9. ways of the Lord will certainly *fall therein*, and  
 2 Pet. 3. they that wrest the Scriptures do it to their own  
 16. *Destruction*. Religion's Motto is, *Nemo me impune lacessit*. 'Tis ill jesting with edge-tools. Je-  
 Zach. 12. *rusalem* will certainly be a *burthensome Stone* to all  
 3. *People*, that *burthen themselves with it*. They that  
 spurn at the Rock of Salvation, will not only be  
 unable to remove it, but will find it a *Stone of*  
 1 Pet. 2.8. *Stumbling*, and a *Rock of Offence*. And we find  
 Isa. 28. 13. those who ridicul'd the Word of the Lord, *braken*,  
*and snared, and taken*. Let all those therefore  
 that mourn in *Sion*, weep over those that will not  
 weep for themselves; and look with pity and  
 compassion upon those that look upon them with  
 scorn and contempt.

3. Consider the *Mischief* that is hereby done  
 to the *Souls of others*. They who thus err, their  
 error remaineth not with themselves, but this  
 poisonous and malignant *Breath* infects others.  
 2 Tim. 2. Words spoken against Religion eat as doth a *Can-*  
 17. *ker*, and they who speak them, seldom *perish a-*  
 2 Pet. 2. lone in their inquiry, for *many follow their pernicious*  
 2. *ways*. Unwary Souls are easily beguild,  
 and brought to conceive rooted *Prejudices* a-  
 gainst that which they hear every where spoken  
 against, and few have *Consideration* and *Resolution*  
 enough to maintain a good opinion of that which  
 they that set up for *Wits*, make it their business  
 Aft. 13.7. to cry down. *Sergius Paulus* was a prudent Man,  
 8, 9, 10. and yet St. Paul saw him in danger of being tur-  
 ned away from the Faith, by the subtle Suggesti-  
 ons of *Elymas* the Sorcerer, which therefore  
 the Apostle resented with a more than ordinary  
 keenness. It is sad to think how many *Young Peo-*  
*ple*, who perhaps were well Educated and Hope-  
 ful,

ful, when they go abroad into the World, by conversing with those who lie in wait to deceive, have their minds insensibly vitiated and debauch'd, and perhaps they are made *seven times more the Children of Hell than those that first seduced them*. Under a pretence of free Thought, and fashionable Conversation, and a generous Disdain of Preciseness and Singularity, Atheistical Principles are imbib'd, the Restraints of Conscience shaken off, Brutish Lusts not only indulg'd but pleas'd for, and serious Godliness and Devotion look'd upon with Contempt, and thus the Heart is impregably fortify'd for Satan against Christ and his Gospel, Wrath is treasur'd up against the Day of Wrath, and those who might have been the *Blessing* prove the *Plague* of their Age, which is a Lamentation, and shall be for a Lamentation to all that wish well for the souls of Men, and to those especially that are desirous of the welfare of the *rising Generation*.

Fourthly, *Let us take heed that none of us do at any time, directly or indirectly, speak against the ways of Religion and Godliness, or say a Confederacy, with those that do so.* Submit to Divine Instructions given with a strong hand not to walk in the way of those People that speak ill of Religion. Isa. 8. 11, 12. Take heed of embracing any Notions which secretly tend to derogate from the Authority of the Holy Scriptures, or to diminish the Honour of Religion in the Soul, or of accustoming your selves to such Expressions as treat not Sacred Things with that awful Regard which is due to them. Those were never reckon'd Wise Men that would rather lose a *Friend* than a *Test*, much less are they to be accounted so that will rather



lose the Favour of their God. Those that in their common Converse make themselves merry with *serious* things, how can it be expected they should at any time be *serious* in them, or experience the influence and comfort of them? It is not likely that those who make the Word of God the subject of their *Jests*, should ever *make* it the Guide of their way, or *find* it the Spring of their Joys. Let us not chuse to *associate* with those that have light thoughts of Religion, and are ready upon all occasions to speak against it. It is not without good reason that among the *many words* with which St. Peter exhorted his *New Converts*, this only is recorded, *Save yourselves from this untoward Generation*, Acts 2. 40.

Psal. 1. 1. Those that listen to the *Counsel of the Ungodly*, and *Stand in the way of Sinners*, as willing to walk with them, will come at length (if Almighty Grace prevent not) to *set in the seat of the Scornful*. Let us therefore abide by that which Job and Eliphaz, even in the heat of Dispute, were agreed in, that the *Counsel of the Wicked shall be far from us*, which Protestation we have, Job 21. 16. and 22. 18. It's dangerous making Friendship with those that have an enmity to serious Godliness, lest we *learn their way*, and get a *Snare* to our Souls.

There are two common *Pretences*, and seemingly plausible ones, under which those that *speak against* Religion shelter themselves, but they are neither of them justifiable.

1. They pretend, that it is only for *Argument sake*, that they *object* against Religion, and pick quarrels with it, and (so little esteem they have of the thing call'd *Sincerity*) they will not be thought to mean as they say. And are the great Prin-

Principles of Religion become such *Moot-points*, such Matters of *doubtful Disputation*, that it is indifferent which side of the Question a Man takes, and upon which he may argue, *pro* or *con*, at his pleasure? That grave and weighty saying of a Learned Heathen is enough to silence this pretence, *Mala enim & impia consuetudo est, contra Deos disputandi, sive ex animo id fit, sive simulate.* It's an ill thing to talk against Religion, whether a Man means as he saith or no, or (in the Language of our Age) whether he speak seriously, or only *banter*. *Julian*, the Apostate, when, before he threw off his Disguise, he frequently argued against Christianity, pretended it was only for *Disputation* sake. But out of the abundance of the Heart the Mouth speaks, and whence can such evil things come but from an evil Treasure there?

2. They pretend that it is not Religion that they ridicule and expose to Contempt, but some particular *Forms* and *Modes* of religious Worship which they do not like. And this is one ill effect of the unhappy Divisions among Christians, that while one side hath labour'd to make the other contemptible; Religion in general hath suffer'd on *all sides*. To *reprove* what we think amiss, with Prudence and Meekness is well, but to *reproach* and make a *Jest* of that which our Fellow-Christians look upon as *Sacred*, and make a part of their Religion, cannot be to any good purpose at all. To scoff at the Mistakes and Weaknesses of our Brethren, is the way to provoke and harden them, but not to convince and reform them. They who think to justify this way of *ridiculing* those that differ from them, by the Instance of *Elijah's* jeering the Priests of

*But,* perhaps know not what manner of Spirit they are of, no more than those Disciples did who Luk. 9. 55. would have their intemperate Heats countenanced by the Example of that great Prophet.

Fifthly, Let us that profess the Christian Religion, be very cautious that we do not give occasion to any to speak against it. If there are those in all places that are industrious to cast reproach upon Religion, then we have need to walk circumspectly, and to look well to our goings, that those who watch for our bailing may have no occasion given them to Blaspheme. It is certain that tho' in Religion there is nothing which may be justly spoken against, yet among those that profess it there is too often found that which deserves to be tax'd, and which cannot pass without just and severe Reflections. — *Pudet hec approbatio nobis* — Are there not those within the Pale of the Church, through whom, the Name of God and his Doctrine are blasphemed, and by reason of whom the way of Truth is evil spoken of. Are there not those who wear Christ's Livery, but are a Scandal to his Family, Spots in the Love-Feasts, and a standing Reproach to that worthy Name, by which they are call'd? Now though it is certainly very unjust and unfair to impute the faults of Professors to the Religion they profess, and to reproach Christianity, because there are those that are call'd Christians who expose themselves to Reproach; yet it is, without question, the Sin of those who give Men occasion to do so. This was the Condemnation in David's Case, and entail'd the Sword upon his House, though the Sin was pardon'd, that by it he had given great occasion to the Enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, 2 Sam. 7. 1.

Ro. 2. 24.  
2 Pet. 2. 2.

Jude 12.  
The four-  
left Re-  
proaches  
of the Pri-  
mitive  
Christians  
took rise  
from the  
vile pra-  
ctises of  
the Gno-  
stics, and  
other Pseu-  
dochristi-  
ans. Of  
which  
Vid. En-  
sch. Eccl.  
Hist. 1. 4.  
7. 1.

2 Sam. 12. 14. Let us therefore double our diligence and care, to give no offence either to Jew or Gentile, that Religion which hath so often been wounded in the House of her Friends, may never be wounded through our sides.

If we enquire (as we are commanded to do) what it is that gives occasion of Reflection upon Religion, we shall find that the *Imprudences* of those that profess it, give some occasion, but their *Immoralities* much more.

1. The *Imprudences* of Christians often turn to the Reproach of Christianity. There may be such over-doing even in Well-doing, as may prove Undoing. When more stress is laid than ought to be upon some instances of Religion, to the justling out of others, and the Exercises of Devotion are either mis-timed, or mis-placed, or mis-proportion'd, Religion is hereby mis-represented, or look'd upon to disadvantage. Rash and indiscreet Zeal may give occasion to those who seek occasion to speak against all religious Zeal. Therefore walk in Wisdom towards Col. 4. 5. them that are without. Religion is a most sweet and pleasant and amiable thing: Let not us by our Indiscretion make it a Task to our selves, and a Terror to others. The more the Children of God are Children of Wisdom, the more they justify it, and its ways. Christian Prudence is very much the beauty and strength of Christian Piety. Though it will secure the welfare of our own Souls if we walk in our Integrity, yet it is necessary for the preserving of the Credit of our Profession, that we walk in Wisdom, Prov. 14. 8. that Wisdom of the Prudent which is to understand his way, that Wisdom which is profitable to direct, Ec. 10. 10. rest. And if any Man lack this Wisdom, let him ask

Jam. 1. 5. *ask it of God, who gives liberally, and upbraid us not with our Folly. Pray with David, Psal, 27. 11. Teach me thy way, O Lord, and lead me in a plain Path because of mine Enemies.* (Hebr. because of mine Observers.) Our Enemies are our Observers, and will be ready to reproach our Way, for the sake of the false steps we take in it, and therefore we have need to ponder the Path of our Feet, and let Discretion guide and govern our Zeal.

2. The *Immoralites* of those who profess Christianity turn much more to the reproach of that Holy Religion; when those that are called Christians, are griping and covetous, and greedy of the World, when they are false and deceitful, and unjust in their Dealings, fowre and morose, and unnatural to their Relations, turbulent and unquiet in Societies, when they are froward and passionate, proud and haughty, hard-hearted and oppressive, loose and intemperate. When they are found guilty of Lying and Cheating, Drunkenness or Uncleanness. When it appears that they keep up some secret *Habits* of Sin, under the cloke and covert of a specious Profession, when they that profess the Christian Faith lick up the vomit of Heathen, and allow themselves in those things that are contrary to the Light and Law even of Natural Religion. This is that which opens the mouths of the Adversaries to speak reproachfully of that Religion, the Profession of which is made to consist with such vile Practises, which cannot possibly consist with the Power of it. This makes People ready to say as that *Mahometan* Prince did, when the Christians had broke their League with him, *O Jesus, are these thy Christians?* Or as the complaint was upon

on another occasion, *Aut hoc non Evangelium, aut hi non Evangelici*, Either this is not Gospel, or these are not to be call'd Professors of the Gospel. If Ministers give offence in any thing, not they only, but their Ministry will be blamed. Nay, if <sup>2 Cor. 6.3</sup> Servants, Christians of the lowest rank and figure, if they be unfaithful, and disobedient to the Government they are under, the Name of <sup>1 Tim. 6:</sup> God, and his Doctrine, is likely to be blasphemed. <sup>1.</sup> Let us therefore who profess Relation to the Eternal God, and Dependance upon the Blessed Jesus, and a Regard to the Holy Scriptures, as we tender the Reputation of our Religion, walk <sup>Col. 1. 10:</sup> worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing. Let us Order our Conversation so in every thing, as that we may adorn the Doctrine of God our Saviour. While <sup>Tit. 2. 10.</sup> we are call'd by so good a Name, let us not dare to do an ill thing. The Disciples of Christ are as a City upon a Hill, and have many eyes <sup>Mat. 5. 14:</sup> upon them, and therefore have need to behave themselves with a great deal of Caution, and to abstain from all appearance of evil. <sup>2 Thes. 5. 12.</sup> Let us not do any thing that is unjust, or unbecoming us, nor allow our selves in that which we know the Gospel we profess doth by no means allow of, lest we be to answer another day, for all the Reproach of Religion which we have occasion'd: How light soever we may make of this now, we shall find that it will greatly enflame the Reckoning shortly, when God will affect the Honour of his own Name, and will be glorified upon those by whom he was not glorified. In consideration of this, let us see to it that we have our Conversation honest among the Adversaries of our Religion, that they who speak against us as Evil-doers, may,



1 Pet. 2: *may, by our Good Works which they shall behold,*  
 12. *be brought to glorify God, and to entertain*  
 good thoughts of Religion, or at least, that  
 17. 15: *we may with well-doing put to silence the igno-*  
*rance of foolish Men.* Our Religion, I am sure,  
 is an Honour to us; let not us then be a  
 Dishonour to it.

Sixthly. *If there be those every where that speak*  
*against Religion and Godliness, let us then as we*  
*have opportunity be ready to speak for it.* Every  
 Christian should be both a Witness and an Advo-  
 cate for his Religion, and the rather because it  
 is so much oppos'd and contradicted. Next to  
 our Care not to be a Shame to the Gospel, should  
 be our Resolution not to be ashamed of the Gospel.  
 You are Subpan'd by the King of Kings to ap-  
 pear for him in the World: *Ye are my Witnesses*  
*saieth the Lord, Isa. 43. 10.* Do not betray this  
 Cause then by declining your Testimony, how  
 much soever you may be brow-beaten and con-  
 fronted. Say with a holy boldness as *Elihu, Job*  
*20. 2. Suffer me a little and I will shew you, that I*  
*have yet to speak on God's behalf.* You hear what is  
 daringly said against God, how his holy Name  
 is trampled upon and abus'd, his Truths contra-  
 dicted, his Word and Ordinances vilified, and  
 have you never a word to say for him? Is our  
 Lord Jesus appearing for us in Heaven, plead-  
 ing our Cause there, pleading it with his own  
 blood, and shall not we be ready to appear for  
 him on Earth, and plead his Cause though it  
 were with the hazzard of our blood? As it is  
 then a time to keep silence, when we our selves are  
 spoken against, *I as a Deaf Man heard not,* so it  
 is then a time to speak, when God is spoken a-  
 gainst,

gainst, and the Honour of our Religion lies at Stake, and at such a time we must take heed, lest by a cowardly silence, we wrong so just a Cause, as if we were either ashamed or afraid to own it. Wisdom's Children should take all occasions to justify Wisdom, and vindicate it from the aspersions that are cast upon it. Read the doom of him that is *asham'd of Christ and of his Words in this adulterous generation.* Mark 8. 38. *Of him shall the Son of Man be asham'd, when he comes in the Glory of his Father.* Not confessing Christ when we are call'd to it, is in effect denying him, and disowning Relation to him, and they who do so, except they repent as Peter did, will shortly be denied and disowned by him. If we should, with an angry countenance at least, drive away a backbiting Tongue that reproacheth our Brother, much more a Blasphemous Tongue that reproacheth our Maker. Should we hear a near Relation or a dear Friend (in whose Reputation it is natural to us to reckon our selves sharers) spoken against and slander'd, we would readily appear in his Vindication; and have we no resentments of the Contempt and Contumely cast upon Religion? Can we sit by contentedly to hear God and Christ, and the Scripture and serious Godliness reflected upon, and have we nothing to say in their behalf? Common equity obligeth us to be the Patrons of a just, but wronged Cause. And that we may not think our selves discharged from this Duty by our inability to defend the Truths and Ways of God, and so make our Ignorance and unskilfulness in the word of Righteousness, an excuse for our Cowardise and want of Zeal, we ought to take pains to furnish our selves with a clear and distinct knowledge of the

- Luke 1. 4. the certainty of those things wherein we have been instructed. We must labour to understand not only the Truths and Principles, but the Grounds and Evidences of our Religion, that we may be able to give an Answer (*Examen*, an *Apology*) to every Man that asks us a Reason of the Hope that is in us. How industrious are the prophane Wits of the Age to find out something to say against Religion, and should not that quicken us to provide our selves with the Armor of Righteousness, both on the right hand and on the left, aiming at the Riches of the full assurance of Understanding? And if we do (as there is occasion) with Humility and Sincerity, and from a principle of Zeal for God, and his Honour, appear in Defence of Religion, and its injur'd Cause, we may doubtless take encouragement from that promise, Mat. 10. 19. *It shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak.* God will own those that own him, and will not fail to furnish his faithful Advocates with needful Instructions, and many a time ordains such strength out of the mouth of Babies and Sucklings as strangely stills the Enemy and the Avenger.

Lastly, Let none of us ever think the worse of the way of Religion and Godliness for its being every where spoken against, nor be frighten'd hereby from walking in that way. The Contempt cast upon the Practise of Piety is with many, an invincible Objection against it; their good Impressions, good purposes and good overtures are hereby crush'd and brought to nothing: They have that within 'em which tells 'em that the way of Sobriety and serious Godliness is a very good way, and they

they sometimes hear that Word behind them, saying, *This is the walk ye in it*, But they have those about 'em that tell them otherwise, and thus the convictions of Conscience are over-rul'd and baffled by the Censures and Reproaches of Men, whose Praise they cover more than the Praise of God.

But to take off the force of this Objection, let us consider these four Things.

1. Consider *who they are* that speak against Religion and Godliness, not only that they are Mortal Men, whom the Moth shall eat up like a Garment, Men that shall die, and the Sons of Men which shall be made as Grass, all whose thoughts will shortly perish with them, and therefore why should we fear their Reproach, or be afraid of their revellings? Nor only they that are fallible Men who may be mistaken, and whose Judgment is by no means decisive, nor such as will bear us out: Shall we put what Men say in the Scale against what God saith? Let God be true and every Man a Liar. We must not be judg'd hereafter, and therefore should not be rul'd now by the Sentiments and Opinions of Men: But those that speak against Religion are also for the most part ill Men; Men of unsettled Heads, debauch'd Consciences, and profligate Lives. 'Tis the Fool and none but he, that saith in his heart, there is no God. The Scoffers of the last daies are Men that walk after their own Lusts, whose carnal, fleshly Interest retains them on that side. David was abus'd by the abjects, Psal. 35. 13. and the Christians at Thessalonica by certain lewd Fellows of the baser sort, Acts 17. 5. Such as those are the Men

Men that make a mock at Religion, and shall we be sway'd and influenced in the greatest Concerns of our Immortal Souls by such Men as these? Shall those have the Government of us that have no little Government of *themselves*? Shall the Cavils and vain Scraps of those, who know not what it is to be *serious*, carry the day against the deliberate Sentiments of all Wise and Good Men, who have with one consent subscribed to the Equity and Goodness of Religion's Ways? If we chuse such as these for our Leaders, surely the *Blind lead the Blind*, and we know the consequence.

2. Consider how *trifling* and *frivolous* that is which is commonly said against Religion and Godliness. The Devil made his first fatal assault upon Mankind by *Lies* and *Slanders*, suggesting hard thoughts of God, and promising Impunity in Sin; and by the same *wretched* methods he still supports and carries on his Interest in the World. They that speak against Religion, *make Lies their Refuge*, and under *falsehood* they *hide themselves*. All those bold and daring things which are spoken against Religion, are either groundless and unproved Calumnies, or very unjust and unfair Representations. Hence the Enemies of Religion are said to be *absurd* and *unreasonable Men*. Men that while they cry up the Oracles of Reason, rebel against all the *Light* and *Laws* of it. Put all that together which is spoken against Godliness, and weigh it in the Balances of right Reason, and you will write *Tekel* upon it, *weigh'd in the Ballances and found*

2 Thel. 3.  
2.

*found wanting.* And, as if an over-ruling Providence had forced the Scoffers of these last days to confess their own Infatuation. Some of those that have been most sharp in their Invectives against Religion, have been no less free in their *Satyrs against Reason* it self, as if they were resolv'd to answer the Character of Solomon's Fool, whose *Wisdom fails him* so far, that he saith to every one that he is a Fool. Eccl. 10.3.

3. Consider how much is to be said for Religion notwithstanding it is every where spoken against. Religion hath Reason on its side, its Cause is a Good Cause; and it is the right way whoever speaks against it. It is no disparagement (as that excellent Pen expresseth it) to be laughed at, but to deserve to be so; you have heard Religion reproach'd, but did you ever find that it *deserv'd* to be so? Nay; on the contrary, have you not found that it very well deserves your best Affections and Services? Enquire of those that have made trial of it, consult the Experiences of others: Call now, if there be any that will answer thee, and to which of the Saints wilt thou turn? Ask thy Father and he will shew thee, thine Elders and they will tell thee, that the Fear of the Lord that is Wisdom, and to depart from Evil, that is Understanding. They will tell thee, That Religion's Ways are Ways of Pleasantness, and all her Paths are Peace, and that all the Wealth and Pleasure in this World is not worth one Hours Communion with God in Jesus Christ. They will tell thee, That there is no Truths so certain and weighty as Divine Truths, and that no Statutes and Judgments are so righteous as the Divine Law, which is Holy, Just, and Good. They will tell thee, That real Holiness and Sanctification

Arch Bp.  
Tillotson's  
Serm. on  
2 Pet. 2.3.

Job. 5. 1.

Deut. 32.

Job. 28. 28

Prov. 3. 17



is the Perfection of the *Human Nature*, as well as the Participation of a *Divine Nature*; That a firm Belief of the *Principles* of Religion is the greatest Improvement of our intellectual Powers, a strict Adherence to its *Rules* our surest Guide in all our Ways, and a chearful Dependance upon its *Promises*, the Fountain of better *Joys*, and the Foundation of better *Hopes* than any we can be furnish'd with in the things of *Sense* and *Time*. They will tell thee that a Life of *serious Godliness* is incomparably the most Sublime and Honourable, the most Sweet and Comfortable Life a Man can live in this World; and that nothing doth more answer the end of our Creation, better befriend Societies, nor conduce more to our true interest in both Worlds than that Holy Religion which is *every where spoken against*.

4. Consider that the cause of Religion and Godliness, however it be spoken against and oppos'd, will infallibly be the prevailing Cause at last. We are sensible of a mighty struggle in the World betwixt the *seed of the Woman* and the *seed of the Serpent*; *Michael* and his *Angels* on the one side, and the *Dragon* and his *Angels* on the other. Many there are that *speak against* Religion, and are very vigorous in opposing it, and some, tho' but a few, that are *speaking for* it, contending for the Faith, and striving against Sin, now it is desirable to know which of these contesting Interests will be *victorious*; and we may be assur'd that the cause of God and Religion will certainly *carry the day*. Contradicted Truths will be effectually clear'd and vindicated; Despised Holiness will be honour'd; Mistakes rectify'd; Reproaches roll'd away; and every thing set in a true Light. *Then you shall return and discern between*

Mal. 3. 18.

tween Truth and Falshood, Right and Wrong, which now it is not always easie to do. The Day of the Lord is said to be in the Valley of Decision, Joel 3. 14. Because then and there will this great Cause be decided, which has been so long depending, and a definitive Sentence given from which there will be no Appeal, and against which there will be no Exceptions. Our God will then come and will not Keep Silence; whoever now Speak against Religion he will then speak for it, and will undoubtedly be justified when he speaks, and clear when he judgeth. Particular Parties and Interests, as such, will wither and come to nothing, But Catholick Christianity, that is Denying Ungodliness and Worldly Lusts, and living Sobriety, Righteously, and Godly in this present World, in expectation of the Blessed Hope: This is Good, and the Goodness of it being founded on the unchangeable Will of the Eternal Mind, it is Eternally Good, and no doubt will be Eternally Glorious, whatever is said against it. This, this is that Gold, and Silver, and those Precious Stones, which will stand the Test of the Fire that shall try every Mans Work, 1 Cor. 3. 12, 13. and will be found into Praise, and Honour, and Glory at the Appearing of Jesus Christ.

1 Pet. 1. 7,

Assure your selves (Christians) there is a Day of Recompences for the Controversy of Sion coming, and it is at Hand; Behold the Judge standeth before the Door. Then Vice and Wickedness which now appear so daring, so threatening, will be effectually and irrecoverably crush'd, and such a fatal and incurable Blow given to the Serpents Head that he shall never bite, shall never spit his Venom any more: Then shall the Upright have the Dominion, Psal. 49. 14. and all the faithful

Ila. 34. 8;

Jam. 5. 9,

E 2

Soldiers

Souldiers of the Lord Jesus shall be call'd to *set*  
 Jol. 10. 24. their Feet upon the Necks of Principalities and  
 Powers. Then Atheists and Blasphemers, the  
 Debauchees and prophane Scoffers of the Age,  
 will have their Mouths stopt with an irresistible  
 Conviction; will have all their vile Calumnies  
 visibly confuted; their Hearts fill'd with un-  
 speakable Horror, and their Faces with everlasting  
 Shame: Their *Refuge of Lies* will then be swept  
 Isa. 28. 17. away, and *Rocks and Mountains* call'd upon in vain  
 Rev. 6. 16. to shelter them: Then shall the Righteous who  
 are now trampled upon and despised, shine as the  
 Ma. 13. 43. Sun in the Firmament of their Father. Wisdom and  
 her Children shall be first justified, and then glori-  
 fied before all the World: And they that through  
 Rev. 15. 2. Grace have gotten the Victory over the Beast, and  
 over his Image, shall solace themselves, and  
 praise their Redeemer with everlasting Songs of  
 Triumph. The Dirt that is now unjustly thrown  
 upon them, will not only be wiped off, but will  
 add to their Glory, and every Reproach for the  
 Mat. 5. 11, 12. Testimony of Jesus will be a Pearl in their  
 Crown. The Righteous Judge of Heaven and  
 Earth will shortly render to every Man according  
 Rom. 2. 6, 7, 8, 9. to his Work: To them who by patient continuance in  
 Well-doing seek for Glory, and Honour, and Immor-  
 tality in the other World, and (in pursuit of  
 that) patiently bear Disgrace and Contempt in  
 this, to them he will render Eternal Life, which  
 will make them as Happy as they can desire, far  
 more Happy than they can now conceive. But to  
 them that are Contentious, and do not obey the Truth,  
 but contradict it, and rebel against the Light and  
 Laws of it, being resolv'd to obey Unrighteousness,  
 to them he will render, with a just and Almighty  
 Hand, Indignation and Wrath, the effect of which  
 will

will be such *Tribulation and Anguish* to the Soul; as will make them feel eternally, what now they will not be perswaded to believe, that it is a fearful thing to fall into the Hands of the living God; for never any hardened their Hearts against him and prosper'd. Brethren, These are the true Sayings of God, on the certainty of which, we may venture our Immortal Souls. Heb. 10. 31. Rev. 19. 9.

They who speak and act so much against Religion, design to run it down, and extirpate it, that the Name of it may be no more in remembrance, and perhaps you hear them sometimes boast of their success herein: If they can but handsomly (as they think) ridicule the sacred Text, or Banter any of the Divine Mysteries, or triumph, as if a good Man, they are to triumph, as if they had run down Religion: Run down Religion? In the Name of my great Master, I defy all the Powers of Hell and Earth to run it down: *Magna est Veritas & pravelebit.* They may sooner run down the flowing Tide, or the Sun when he goes forth in his strength, than run down the least of the Dictates of Eternal Truth, not one iota or tittle of which shall fall to the Ground. *Dagon* will certainly fall before the Ark of the Lord; and the Rod of Aaron will swallow up the Rods of the Magicians. Do they talk of running down Religion, and the Scriptures, and the Ordinances of Christ? The Virgin Daughter of Sion hath despised them, and laughed them to scorn, the Daughter of Jerusalem hath shaken her Head at them; and hath therefore put them to shame, because God hath despised them, as it is said, *Psal. 53. 5.* He that sets in the Heavens enjoying himself, and rides upon the Heavens, for the Help of his People, derides their Attempts against the Kingdom of his Son, as vain and fruitless. The Lord

*Psa. 83. 4.*

*Magna est Veritas & pravelebit.*

*Mat. 5. 18.*

*Ex. 7. 12.*

*Isa. 37. 22.*

*Psal. 2. 4.*

*Dent. 33. 26.*

34  
PL. 37. 13. Lord shall laugh at them, for he sees that his Day is  
coming. They have their Day now, it is their Hour  
and the Power of Darknels; But God will have  
his Day shortly, and a Glorious Day it will be,  
when our Lord Jesus shall appear in all the Power  
and Grandeur of the Upper World, to the ever-  
lasting Terror and Confusion of all his Adver-  
saries, and the everlasting Joy and Honour of all  
his faithful Servants and Soldiers; With the belie-  
ving Hopes and Prospects of which Day, let all those  
who heartily espouse and plead Religion's righteous  
Cause, Comfort themselves and one another.

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FINIS

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